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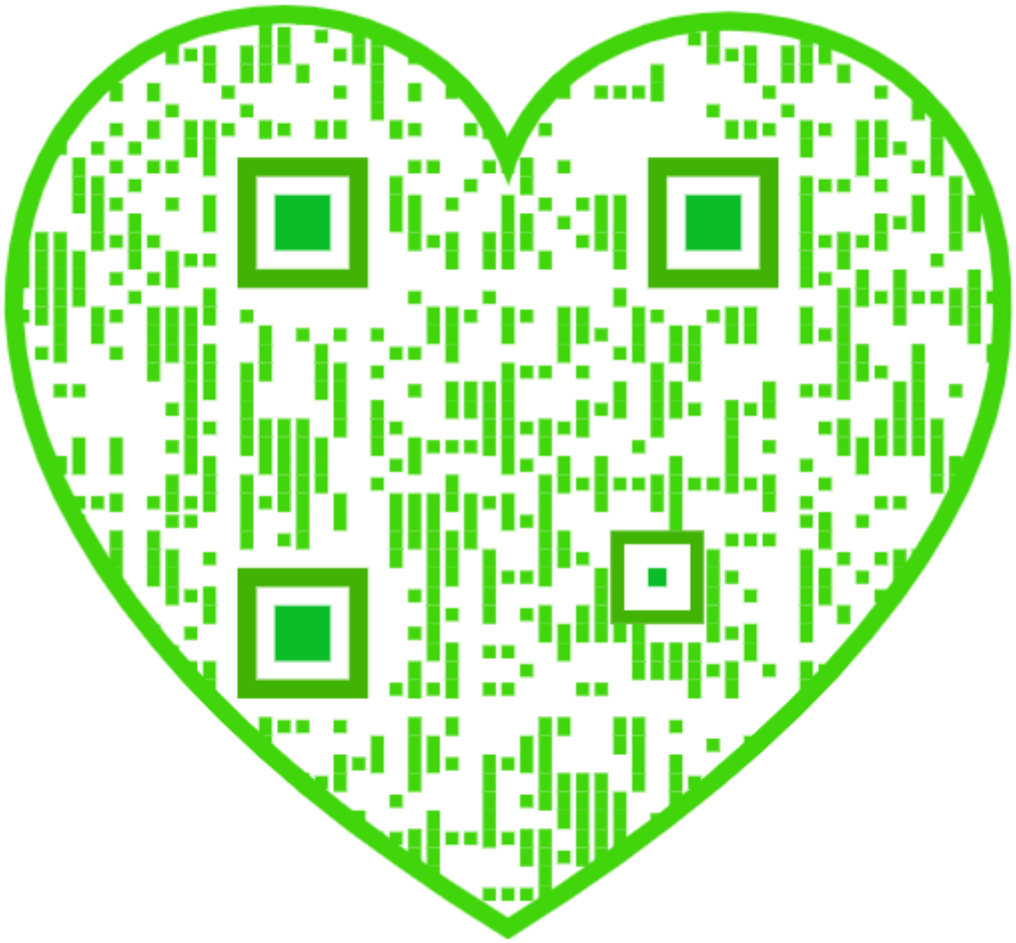

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TEACHING TO READ

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BY

JAMES L. HUGHES

INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS, TORONTO

AUTHOR OF "MISTAKES IN TEACHING," "HOW TO SECURE AND RETAIN ATTENTION," "FROEBEL'S EDUCATIONAL LAWS," "DICKENS AS AN EDUCATOR," ETC.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no other subject in which the results have been so unsatisfactory as in reading, considering the amount of time devoted to it in school. The chief reason for the failure has been that the aim has been to train the race to read aloud instead of training it to read. The power of reading well means the power of getting thought from visible language rapidly, definitely and comprehensively. Very nearly all reading has to be done silently, yet in the past, the aim of the schools has been to train pupils to read aloud. Tested by the power of their pupils as a whole to read well aloud, or to read well silently, the work of the schools has been a lamentable failure.

The teachers of the past believed that the way to train a child to be a good silent reader was to train him to read aloud. The reverse is true. The true way to make both good oral readers and good readers is to begin by making good silent readers.

The aim in the past was to train pupils to read slowly; the true aim is to train them to read as fast as possible. The man who reads only two pages in the time in which he should be able to read three pages is handicapped for life.

The process of the schools in the past has been

to use expression as a means of developing self-expression. The true process in teaching reading and every other subject is exactly the opposite. The process of the past weakened the power of both expression and self-expression. Expressing the thought of others in their language does not develop our power to express our own thought. On the other hand good training in self-expression—the expression of our own thought in our own language—does develop the power of expressing the thought of others in their language. Expression is not a true psychological basis for self-expression; self-expression is the true psychological basis for expression.

The aims of this book are:

1.—To consider the meaning of learning to read, and to decide what new powers the child must gain in order to be a good reader.

2.—To prevent the weakening of the child's natural power of self-expression by unnatural processes of expression.

3.—To make clear the relationships between silent reading and reading aloud, between word recognition and thought recognition, between the expression of an author's thought in the author's language, the expression of an author's thought in the child's own language, and the expression of the child's own thought in his own language.

4.—To apply the same fundamental laws in teaching reading, that should be applied in teaching all other subjects; the law of self-activity, the law of self-active interest, the law of development by solving

a related sequence of appropriate and progressively difficult problems, and the law of repetition of operative processes instead of repetition of words.

5.—To show that the processes of learning to speak a language and of learning to read it are not similar processes, and that it is necessarily illogical to try to follow the process of learning to speak while teaching the process of learning to read. Speaking is natural, visible language is artificial. In speaking thought suggests language, in reading language suggests thought.

6.—To prove that a great deal of time has been wasted, and a great deal of power lost in the past by making the process of learning to read a long instead of a short process, an uninteresting instead of an interesting process, a dwarfing instead of a developing process, a process of responsive activity instead of a process of self-activity, and a memorizing instead of an operative process.

7.—To outline the steps that should be taken to give the child the power of automatic word recognition in a few weeks, so that he may be able to give his undivided attention to the thought of the selection he is reading. The power of expression is inevitably and permanently weakened by allowing a child to try to read aloud, if he has to give conscious attention to the words themselves.

8.—To suggest simple, interesting and effective plans for preserving and developing the child's natural powers of self-expression.

9.—To indicate some ways in which an unlimited supply of most useful reading matter may be provided at the lowest possible cost.

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TEACHING TO READ

CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF LEARNING TO READ

In order to decide wisely in regard to the best method of teaching children to read, it is essential to get a clear conception of the new elements of power the child has to acquire and develop by the process of learning to read. Confused or indefinite ideals naturally lead to incorrect and imperfect methods of teaching. What new powers come to a child when he learns to read? What does it mean to learn to read?

Reading is generally accepted as meaning to read aloud. Much confusion has resulted from this general misconception. Reading is the power of getting thought from visible language. It is the power of recognizing in visible form the language with which the child is already familiar in the spoken form. A child may become a great reader and may possess the highest skill as a reader without being trained to read well orally. A good reader is one who can extract thought accurately, comprehensively and rapidly from visible language. The best reader is

the man who can most rapidly, most comprehensively, and most definitely, get thought from visible language. Few people can read rapidly enough. The schools have made no systematic effort, in the past, to develop the power of rapid, comprehensive, and accurate extraction of thought from written or printed matter. They have wasted the time of the child, and generally dwarfed his powers by tiresome and discouraging attempts to train him to read aloud before he has been trained to read. This error has weakened the power of good oral reading, and what is much more to be deplored, it has prevented the proper development of the power of good reading, which means accurate, comprehensive and rapid thought-getting from visible language.

Oral reading is the power of expressing orally the words of visible language in such a way as to reveal the thought of the author. Reading is a means of gaining thought; oral reading is a means of expressing thought.

A child may express orally, his own thought or the thought of another person. When the thought of the other person is revealed in visible form, he is called an author. The correct process of training a child to express his own thought orally is very different from the process of training him to express an author's thought orally. The child may express an author's thought orally either in the language of the author or in his own language. The intellectual operations in these two processes are different, and the essential difference should be understood and remembered by teachers. The distinction between expression and self-expression is vital. Self-expression is infinitely greater than expression.

The great efforts of teachers in the past, not only

in reading but in other subjects, have been put forth to develop expression, not self-expression. The fact is, that the only true psychological path to good expression is through a well developed power of self-expression. The real power in good expression is self-expression. All expression in which the vital element is not self-expression must be mechanical. The power of oral expression of an author's thought in the author's language is psychologically very different from the power of self-expression in oral language. Most teachers yet believe that by training children to read orally they are developing the power of oral self-expression. They are really training only the mechanism of expression, and doing even this in the least effective way. The real self-hood of the child is not awakened by the process of oral reading.

In order to begin to study the true psychological process by which a child should learn to read it is necessary to make a clear distinction between:—

1. Word recognition by the child,
2. Thought recognition by the child,
3. The expression of an author's thought in the child's language,
4. The expression of an author's thought in the author's language,
5. The expression of the child's own thought in his own language.

The fundamental error in teaching reading is to compel or to allow the child to try to read aloud before he has acquired two powers: automatic word recognition and accurate thought extraction. A child should read silently as soon as he has acquired control of the elements of word recognition, and he should at first be allowed to sound words aloud in

order to be able to recognize them as representing the oral words of his language which he already uses. But he should not read orally till he is able to perform the operations of word recognition and thought extraction without conscious effort. So long as a child has to give any part of his conscious attention to the recognition of the words in a sentence, he has only a portion of his intellectual power left for recognizing and relating the thoughts which it contains. So long as he has to devote any of his conscious attention either to word recognition or to thought extraction and relationship he has only a portion of his intellectual power left for thought expression.

It may be laid down as a fundamental law that when a child or a man is asked to perform any complex operation, he should be able to give his direct or primary attention to the highest element, or stage, in the complex processes. The processes subordinate to the highest should be so thoroughly under his control that he can perform them automatically, or without conscious effort. When a child is expressing thought in writing, for instance, he should not require to think about the forms of the letters. Letter formation should have become automatic, or else the child must give a portion of his mental effort to the construction of the letters, and he will have only a part of his mind left to do his thinking. If a man is able to concentrate his mind fully on his subject while writing, he cannot be conscious of the fact that there are letters or words, or grammatical rules, or laws of style. He thinks, and the language is organized, and the visible words formed, without direct conscious effort on his part. His primary attention is given to his subject; his

secondary attention directs all the subordinate elements of expression. The well-trained man is conscious of the highest element only—his subject. His primary attention should be wholly given to the recognition of the increasingly vivid and progressively comprehensive revelations he is receiving, and to definite thinking in regard to them as related to what he already knows about the subject under consideration. His subconsciousness should attend to the language and the letter forms necessary to express his thoughts in visible form. After he has concluded his thinking, he should of course go over his written expression of his thought, giving his primary attention to the language he has used, and improving it so as to make it as perfect as possible in definiteness and in style.

Each child has two styles of writing—the writing he does in his writing book and the writing he does when he is writing an original composition or essay. In the first case his primary attention is given to the form of the letters as he writes them, in the second case his primary attention should be given to the thought he wishes to express. The second is the only true test of his writing.

Oral reading is a complex operation, consisting of three processes—the recognition of the words, the recognition of the author's thought, and the expression of this thought definitely with properly related emphasis. The child's attention should not be distracted from the highest element of his work by having to pay conscious attention to the subordinate elements. He cannot acquire thought as accurately, as comprehensively, and as rapidly as he ought to acquire it, if he has to give part of his primary attention to the recognition of the words he has to

read. Few children ever recover from the dwarfing of their natural powers of expression by the unnatural attempts to read aloud when the primary attention has to be paid chiefly or in any appreciable degree to the recognition of the words. The earlier stages of reading aloud are usually mere efforts to sound the words of the selection. Reading aloud should never be a monotonous droning. It should be oral expression of thought which was first the thought of the author, but which has become the thought of the reader.

But, it is often urged, that we encourage the child to begin to write his thoughts as soon as he is acquainted with enough letter powers to make even a few words. We do not wait till he can write perfectly before training him to express his thoughts in writing, and both his power of thinking and his power of expression in writing are improved by his effort. Why should we not begin with oral reading as soon as the child can begin to recognize a few words?

The supposed parallel between the two cases does not exist. In the first case there is no interference with the child's thinking, except the subconscious effort he has to make in expressing his thought after it has been conceived and is ready for expression. In the second case the distraction is caused through the difficulties experienced before the thought is ready to be expressed. It is perfectly philosophical to train the child to express his thoughts either orally or in writing before the oral means or the written means of expression is perfect. But it is not wise to ask a child to try to express thought which he cannot possibly comprehend clearly and at the same time compel him to give his most direct attention

and his best intellectual energy to the recognition of the visible form of the thought he is asked to interpret and express. Thinking and expression are interrelated, and each reacts upon the other, but the dominant element in the relationship is the thinking. The power of expression is the subconscious or secondary department, the thinking is the conscious or primary department. The expression cannot be clear unless the thought is clear. When the thought becomes definite, and related, and logical in the mind, expression becomes correspondingly clear and logical, and with training and practice and faith it becomes spontaneously responsive to the operations of the mind.

Learning to read is the process by which the child discovers that the language he uses already orally may be recorded in visible form, and by which he learns to recognize the visible forms of language so as to interpret them readily and get new thought from them. Learning to read *orally* is the process by which the child is trained not only to recognize language in its visible forms, and get thought clearly from visible language, but also to express the thought orally in the words of the author.

CHAPTER II

THE LOGICAL ORDER OF THE STEPS IN LEARNING TO READ—AND TO READ ALOUD

THE first step in teaching how to read is to guide the child in discovering that its own oral language may be represented in visible form and re-interpreted into oral language. He knows when he comes to school that mother and father and other adults can look at the marks in a book or paper and tell him the story they find there, but it is an important step in his experience to reveal to him the fact that his own words may be made visible and then recognized and expressed by others. One of the best plans for doing this is to ask the child to say something about his dog, or the baby, or any of the many interesting things related to his own life and experience. His exact words should be written on the blackboard by the teacher. If there are several pupils about to begin the mysterious process of learning to read, each one should give a short sentence to be written on the board. When all the sentences have been written, the teacher should send to another room for a senior pupil and ask him to tell each child what he said to the teacher.

In a school where there is only one teacher, a senior pupil should be sent out of the room while the little ones tell their stories. He should return when the stories have been written on the blackboard. This exercise will arouse a deep personal in-

terest in the work of reading and awaken a desire for the possession of the power to make oral language visible and to translate visible language into oral language. It may be made the basis of a permanent interest in reading and the beginning of a desire to read stories for themselves. Under the guidance of a skilful and sympathetic teacher it opens up a new realm of power and of attractive mystery.

Having developed an interest in the power of finding wonderful stories in the printed marks in the books, the next step is to reveal the powers of these marks and show how what they say may be understood. Whatever plan or method may be adopted to train the child to recognize language in its visible forms, it is clear that by some means he must gain the power of word recognition before he can read either silently or aloud. Word recognition is the essential basis of all reading, the only possible basis of reading. The various so-called methods of teaching reading are really methods of teaching the power of word recognition. The best method of teaching word recognition is the one which makes the child most independent of the teacher and gives him the power of rapid and accurate word recognition in the shortest time, if at the same time it develops alertness of mind, definiteness in observation and reasoning and relating ability. But, whatever method of enabling the child to recognize words is adopted, the power to do so without conscious effort must be developed before the child can read. Reading and recognizing words should not be confounded.

When the child is able to recognize words he may at once begin the practice of silent reading, which is the power of gaining thought from visible lan-

guage without expressing it. Silent reading should precede reading aloud; first, because it is a less complex process than reading aloud; second, because to be able to read well silently reduces the danger of making reading aloud a mechanical performance; third, because it makes thought-gaining the true purpose of reading; fourth, because reading aloud, if practised before the power of rapid, comprehensive, and accurate thought extraction from visible language has been developed, is the most certain way to prevent the cultivation of this vitally important power, the loss of which robs reading of its supreme value; fifth, because the power to read well and rapidly silently is the only power that can make it possible to read well aloud; and sixth, because when children begin to learn to read even at the age of eight or nine, and they should certainly not begin earlier, they are too immature to be able to interpret an author's meaning freely and expressively in the words of the author.

One of the misleading conceptions of the past that continues to confuse the vision of teachers is that oral reading is more important than silent reading. We forget the changed conditions of life. Individual reading has increased with rapid strides. New conditions have made it impossible and unnecessary that there should be much reading aloud. All the advantages that can be claimed for the practice of reading aloud may be granted without reservation, however, without acknowledging that it is comparable in value, either educationally or practically, to the power of accurate, comprehensive and rapid thought-getting from printed matter. A very small minority really requires to read aloud; every one who wishes to increase his store of knowledge or

to keep up with the progress of the world must read a great deal silently, often in the odd moments on the train or between the hours of work.

Many of the small minority whose duties require them to read aloud read without notable ease, grace, or effectiveness, and this should long ago have led educators to question the wisdom of continuing an educational practice which so manifestly produced unsatisfactory results. But the great body of educators do not really teach oral reading with the purpose of producing a race of good oral readers. Those who think about this matter at all know that comparatively few will ever be called upon to read much aloud.

Reading aloud has been practised so universally in schools, because teachers have had the erroneous idea that oral reading is the proper way to qualify the race for proper reading—real reading—reading for clearer intellectual vision, for the kindling influence of literature, and science, and history, and other departments of human knowledge, for the acquisition of the inheritance bequeathed to each individual by the leaders of the past. Silent reading has been the real aim of the teaching of reading, but the only path that teachers have taken to reach silent reading has been the wearisome path of oral reading. By being forced to take this path few have ever become good silent readers, able to extract thought rapidly, accurately, and comprehensively from printed matter, and fewer still have ever become good oral readers able to reveal to others the full richness and strength and beauty of the thought of the great literary leaders. The population of North America is now about ninety millions. Are there more than ninety men and women

in North America who can successfully interpret the true meaning of the masterpieces of literature by reading them aloud? One in a million of the population of what may fairly be considered the most universally educated people in the world, if not the most thoroughly educated, does not seem to be a very gratifying result of the operation of a method, if its aim is to train to read well orally.

The fact is that the value of real reading, not reading aloud, has been the only ground on which the great amount of time devoted to reading in the schools could possibly be defended. Teachers have worked under the delusion that the true way to teach pupils to read well is to make them read aloud, and this misconception has prevented the proper development both of good reading and of good oral reading. One thing should be remembered by those who still urge that the great aim in teaching reading should be to make good oral readers, and that is that the only kind of printed matter that is read aloud is what is technically called literature. Books on science, or art, or music, or philosophy, or education, or even history, are not read aloud in public, and very rarely, if ever, in private. Few readers, comparatively, read much aloud after they leave school, and even the few who do so read within a very limited range of literature.

The true and logical order in teaching reading is to give a thorough training in silent reading before asking the child to read aloud, if we wish to make him either a good reader or a good oral reader. The universal process in the past has been to try to make good silent readers by oral reading, the true process is just the reverse of this. Silent reading is the true way to lead to good oral reading.

But it is claimed by some thoughtful teachers that they must necessarily require the pupils to read aloud in order to discover whether they understand what they are reading or not. The answer to this is twofold: first, the test proposed is not a reliable one, many children can read a stanza of poetry with correct expression who cannot give an accurate or adequate idea of its meaning; second, the real test of a child's understanding of a selection is to ask him to explain its meaning in his own words and not in the author's words. This should be the fourth step in learning to read. The pupils should be systematically trained to read with the view of reporting the meaning of the selections given to them, sometimes in writing, and as often as possible orally, but always in their own language and not the language of the author. Three definite aims should be kept persistently in view in this department of the work of teaching how to read. The pupils should be trained to discover the author's thought, accurately, comprehensively, and as rapidly as possible. In securing these vitally important results the teacher may adopt a variety of plans to awaken and retain the interest of the pupils. One of the plans that may be used in all grades is to have in each class large collections of short clippings from children's papers, magazines, or newspapers, pasted on cards. These should be distributed on the desks with the clippings on the under side of the cards. When every child has a card a signal should be given and the cards should be turned over. When a sufficient time has been given the cards should be placed on the desks, with the blank side upward, and the children asked to stand and tell the class what they have learned from the selections on their cards.

Short stories, especially humorous stories, form excellent material for this exercise. As the children grow older, brief statements about science, or history, or biography, or any department of knowledge in which children should naturally be interested, should form part of the reading matter on the cards for the silent sight reading exercises. The whole class may be tested on the same selection by having it clearly written on the blackboard and covered with a curtain. When the curtain has been dropped again over the selection each child may write an account of what he has learned by reading what was written on the board. Other plans for conducting such an exercise will suggest themselves to teachers, but those who are awake to the importance of thought-getting from visible language as one of the most essential elements of a good education, will not be satisfied till they have thousands of card clippings arranged in sets for use in their classes. The pupils will gladly aid not only in cutting and mounting the clippings, but also in gathering material from which the teacher may make the selections.

It is singular that teachers should so long have overlooked the importance of rapid reading. The man who reads slowly is handicapped through life. Accuracy and comprehensiveness should of course never be sacrificed for speed in reading, but great rapidity of reading power may be developed without loss of the power to gain an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the meaning of the matter that is read. Indeed those who are trained to read rapidly by proper methods are able to concentrate their attention so definitely that they can take more from a chapter or a book than those who read more slowly. An old rule for good reading ran:—

"Learn to read slow, all other graces
Will follow in their proper places."

This couplet referred to reading aloud, which was the only reading considered until recently. For oral reading the advice is good. The opposite advice is the proper rule to follow in reading. We should train children by every plan we can devise to read well, that is to get as much as possible of the author's thought and emotion from his writings, and each child should be trained to do this as rapidly as possible. If a child has been trained to do as much in four minutes as he would otherwise have taken five minutes to do, his power of accumulating thought from books has been increased twenty-five per cent. All people cannot reach the same standard of rapidity in reading, but each one should be trained to read at his best rate.

Silent reading at sight, the results of which are to be reported to the teacher and the class, should be a specific department of the training in reading, and one of the best elements in such training consists of time tests in which a limited time is allowed to get the full meaning of the selection after the curtain has been removed or the cards turned over. It adds to the interest and the concentration of the class to pass the cards after each child has reported and give the same time as before to the new readers, after which they may report any part omitted by the first readers in the stories or statements.

When the pupils are able to get thought rapidly, accurately, and comprehensively from printed matter without having to give attention by conscious effort and to use part of their intellectual power in recognizing the words, they are ready to begin to practise reading aloud. They do not need to *learn*

to read aloud. Learning to read aloud has been the chief cause of bad oral reading. The early stages of the methods formerly used in what was called "learning to read," but which was in reality an attempt at learning to read aloud, inevitably interfered with the further development of the child's natural power of expression, and worse still, in most cases weakened this power. All teachers recognized this suggestive fact. There was no other advice that used to be so persistently given to children when they had finished their pitiable efforts at reading aloud in school as that contained in the sentences—"Read naturally," and "Read as you speak." All teachers knew that nearly all pupils were dwarfed in their power of thought expression by efforts to read aloud before they were ready to do so, and those who reflected knew that most children never fully regained their lost freedom and force in expression. Yet this blighting performance went on, and in most schools it still goes on. The child is asked to do an impossible thing, and when he inevitably does it in a mechanical way he is asked, often peevishly, why he does not do it in a natural way. If he were gifted with psychological vision he might reply: I am natural. My work is natural. I am doing in the only way a reasonable being could expect the totally unnatural thing you have asked me to do. It is unnatural for me to be able to express the thought of other people in the language of other people as naturally as I can express my own thought in my own language. When I am expressing my own thought I have only to think, and I am not even conscious of the way in which I am thinking. My mind acts spontaneously and my power of speech responds to my thought automatically, and unless in some way

I have the terrible misfortune of being made self-conscious, my powers of thinking and expressing will continue to act in perfectly interrelated harmony, and be mutually developing as long as I live. As I am trained to think more logically, and as my mind is enriched and stimulated by the great thoughts of the race, and as my imagination develops, and I gain clearer visions of nature, and my fellowmen, and God, my language and all my powers of expression will improve responsively as my mind develops. But you are interfering with Nature's wonderful plan, and then censuring me for not being natural. You plead with me to "read as I talk," carelessly failing to remember that when I talk I speak as I think, and that when you make me try to read aloud before I can recognize the words without conscious effort, I am thinking what the names of the words are and usually trying to say some of them before I have fully decided what even their names are. The thought I could naturally express under such unnatural conditions would not be edifying. In obedience to you I try to report to you the result of my recollections of word forms and my discoveries of new word forms. I cannot report the vital thought of the selection. I am not able to get it myself. Most of my intellectual power is employed in recognizing the words, and I say them to you as I recognize them. I can say some of them more freely than others, because I remember them more easily. It takes me longer to recognize some of them, or to discover the names of the new ones, so I name them in a mechanical way. I drawl sometimes because I have not made up my mind fully what the next word is. I am ordered by you to do a mechanical work and I do it in a mechanical way,

which is the only possible way that I could do it. I am naturally unnatural when I go through a mechanical process in a mechanical way. I am not trying to express thought, I am trying to recognize words and give you the result of my effort. When you compel me to try to make this process expressive you are asking me to give expression to what cannot possibly be expressive. It is natural to express thought—when it is my own, or has become clear to me. It is not natural to express words as words, and this is what you are asking me to do. When the thought is mine, either mine by origination, or mine by extraction from visible language used by others, I can express it. I can express it clearly and naturally, and with progressively developing power in my own words, and in due time, when I can perform the essential subordinate operations without conscious effort, I shall be able to express the thoughts of others in their own language. But I cannot do so now because I cannot yet recognize even the words without a conscious intellectual effort. So I fail because you ask me to do an impossible thing. And the most serious result of your terrible blundering in my education is that my attempts at unnatural expression prevent the proper development of my natural powers of expression, and make me self-conscious—not of my strength but of my weakness.

The reading hour should be one of the happiest hours of the day. Even the hour for reading aloud may be made a happy and very profitable hour, but many changes will have to be made before it produces a reasonable amount of happiness or profit. One of the most unreasonable practices in connection with the old-time reading lesson was the thought-

lessness of teachers in compelling a whole class to attend while one unfortunate pupil was grinding out his allotted sentence or paragraph. This, in most cases, added to the self-consciousness and wretchedness of the temporary victim, and was worse than a waste of time to the rest of the class. A class may gain a small amount of expressive power through unconscious imitation, if it listens to good oral reading, occasionally, but hearing poor reading regularly and listening because of external compulsion must interfere with the development of the power of good oral expression both in speaking and reading. It would be vastly more profitable for the rest of the class to write, or draw, or do manual training work with cardboard, or raffia, or other available materials while each individual pupil is reading. In order to save time three or four may have their readers open and stand ready to read during an oral reading lesson, one new pupil rising in turn when each reader finishes and takes his seat to go on with the other work that has been assigned. In this way the pupils may be engaged at profitable work and receive a training in concentration on specific work under distracting conditions, a very desirable training which is generally entirely overlooked in schools.

"But every reading lesson should be a literature lesson and therefore all pupils should take part in it." Correct! Some day we shall read orally during the literature lessons only, and then oral reading and reading will both be better.

The schools have almost universally failed to gain the true pedagogic lesson from the generally acknowledged fact that all children are naturally self-expressive. They are naturally self-expressive in the

readjustment and rearrangement of tablets, blocks, etc., in using plastic material, in the use of pencil or crayon, or brush, and in revealing their thoughts orally. Finding the pupils with this power of self-expression in good working order, the teacher should ask himself the question: Is this power only a temporary power, or should it continue to develop in harmony with the child's development and culture? There can be but one reasonable answer to this question. Every power for good may be developed, should be developed. But this natural power of expression is practically lost by nearly all children. How is it lost? Here is the teacher's opportunity to investigate. The Creator does not take the power away. Some one must be responsible. When power of any kind is lost it is lost by disuse or misuse. The power of free and effective oral self-expression has been lost in schools in both ways. Oral self-expression has not been a definite aim with wise and persistent methods for its development by regular and enjoyable exercise, and the oral expression most practised has been oral expression merely in revealing the thoughts of others, and in revealing these thoughts in the language of others. The neglect of proper methods for developing the child's wonderful powers of oral self-expression is a serious charge against teachers, but to confine the child's oral expression mainly to oral reading in which every fundamental operation of the child's thinking and oral self-expression is interfered with is a violation of pedagogic principles which cannot be too strongly condemned. Both negatively and positively, both by disuse and misuse, the proper development of the child's natural power of oral self-expression has been arrested and distorted.

These lessons should be learned as the result of a careful investigation into the causes of loss of naturalness in oral self-expression.

First, one of the chief aims in primary schools should be the preservation and development of the natural tendency and power of oral self-expression.

Second, oral self-expression should not be criticised by personal criticism of the child either for inaccuracy of language, style of delivery, or erroneous statement. The child should receive credit for his effort. The fact that he thinks incorrectly is not a reasonable ground for censure by his teacher. If he has honestly tried to think about the question at issue, and has freely expressed his views, it is grossly unjust for his teacher to laugh at his errors or censure him for them. His views should be treated with respect. They need not be accepted as correct. The teacher should lead him to see the omitted or unknown step or steps in his thinking, but he should never ridicule or scold him or give him bad marks because he is unable to think as well as an adult. If he could do so he would not need a teacher to train him to think. The important aim should be to preserve the child's self-respect, and self-faith, so that he may not acquire a weakening self-consciousness. To censure him arrests the development of both his power to think and his power to give expression to his thoughts. His errors in speech should be noted for the guidance of his teacher in lessons in language to the whole class. Impersonal criticism and full explanations of reasons for rejecting one form of language and accepting the other, if given to the class, will, in due time, enable each child to overcome his weakness and his errors in the use of language, and by this course his natural

freedom and force in oral self-expression will be preserved.

Third, the child should not be compelled to try to do any oral work during his early years in school which will interfere with the development of his natural power of self-expression. His oral self-expression should be the expression of thought, of thought that is clear to his own mind, of thought that is really his own whether it is original or not. He must have attained to a high degree of power in several departments of culture before he should be expected to read aloud without loss—definite loss—of the power of oral expression. He must have learned to recognize words instantaneously without conscious effort; he must have acquired the ability to extract thought very rapidly from words, phrases, and sentences, and he must have gained the complex power of accurately using the author's language in expressing the thought which he receives from the selection he is reading.

If children were trained to read well without being asked to read aloud till they were fourteen or fifteen years of age it would be a great advantage in many ways. They would enjoy reading as a means of acquiring thought, they would retain their natural power of expression, increased by special training and by general intellectual culture, and they should at that age be able to recognize visible language so rapidly and take from it the shades of feeling and depth of thought expressed by it so thoroughly as to be able to read aloud without injury to their natural powers of oral expression. The limit of their power of oral expression would depend on their natural ability and the character and extent of their training in oral expression.

As a co-ordinating step naturally leading from free self-expression of thought orally in the child's own language to free and natural expression of an author's thought in the author's language, the child should be led to recite brief selections, after studying their meaning carefully and committing them to memory so thoroughly that he is not conscious of an effort in remembering the language. Reciting is more nearly allied to speaking original matter than oral reading is. It is an intermediate step between original speaking and oral reading, and therefore it should follow original speaking or oral self-expression as a final preparation for oral reading. When a child is reciting, the language and thought expressed have really been made his own language and thought, although they are not his by origination. They come to him, the thought to his mind and the language to his lips, as freely as his own thought and language come to him in oral self-expression, but they come by entirely different mental processes.

In oral self-expression thought precedes language, in recitation and in oral reading the language precedes the thought. Language, by the wonderful arrangement of the Creator, spontaneously comes to express original thought, but in reciting or oral reading, the thought comes from the language. In speaking, thought suggests language; in reciting and oral reading, language suggests thought.

In oral expression, reciting, and oral reading, the thought should be the dominant element in the mind of the child. The language in each case should receive his subconscious or secondary attention; his conscious or primary attention should be given to the thought. In the first case his secondary at-

tention is given to language as the expression of thought, in the second and third cases it is given to language as the present source of thought to him. In oral expression his primary attention is given to the origination of thought, in reciting it is given to remembering thought, and in oral reading to the comprehension of thought. In each case thought must be clear in the child's mind and must be consciously prepared by him for the enlightenment or amusement of those who hear him, before he can properly express it. It is clear, therefore, from these considerations, that reciting is the logical step between oral self-expression and oral reading.

It is of primary importance that no child should be compelled to recite or read aloud. Good teachers wait patiently till their pupils are willing or even anxious to recite before urging or even suggesting that they should do so. If they have not been made weakly self-conscious, they will be anxious to take their part in the recitation or reading exercises quite as soon as they should be permitted to do so. To urge them to do it before they are ready makes them weakly self-conscious, makes reciting a drudgery instead of a joy, and robs them of the development that ought to come from their efforts. There comes a time in the development of every child when he enjoys doing everything that will help to make him stronger in any department of his power. Most teachers unwisely try to make their pupils perform many good operations too early, and evil instead of good always results from such premature efforts.

The steps in training children to read may be summarized as follows:

1. Revealing to the child the facts that its own oral language may be expressed in visible form and

re-interpreted orally, and that books may tell them more wonderful and more beautiful stories than even those that have been told by mother and father.

2. Rapid word recognition.

3. Power to extract thought rapidly, accurately, and comprehensively from visible language.

4. Power to express orally and in writing the thought of the author in the child's own language.

5. From the beginning—and *entirely independent of the reading lessons*—the child's wonderful natural powers of oral self-expression should be cultivated by methods that will not interfere with his spontaneity, or make him self-conscious.

6. The recitation of perfectly memorized and well understood selections appropriate to the child's stage of development.

7. When these six steps have been taken, the child is ready to begin to read aloud. The age at which he may begin to do so cannot be definitely fixed. That depends on his natural ability, his temperament, and the methods of his teachers. He may be permitted to read aloud voluntarily long before he should be required to do so by his teacher. Reading aloud should never be the nerve-straining, power-arresting process that it has been and still is in so many places.

While decided objection has been taken to premature attempts at reading aloud, it should be understood that pupils must speak the words, when they are beginning the work of word recognition, until they have become familiar with the way in which the different powers and sounds of letters coalesce to form words. This process of learning to recognize words is not reading, nor oral reading, but a step in learning to read.

Note 1. The best reading I ever heard a child do was done by a sixteen year old girl the first time she ever read aloud. I found her at sixteen unable to speak without great difficulty on account of stammering. She had never answered orally at school, and had never read aloud. I was indignant at teachers who had taught her carefully the correct grammatical forms of speech and yet had left her in a condition of inability to speak. I offered to guide her in overcoming her difficulty, and succeeded in winning her confidence and in enabling her to speak freely. I then without warning her previously asked her to read aloud to me. She at first shrank from the ordeal, but as she was in no sense afraid of me I persuaded her to make the experiment. I told her I wished her to read something entirely new to her. I was delighted to find when I went to my library that she had read very widely—though never aloud. "Have you read Shakespeare?" "Yes." "Wordsworth?" "Yes." Burns, Longfellow, Moore, Bryant, Byron, Whittier, Cowper, Holmes, were offered in turn, but these and others had been read. The first volume of poetry I found that she had not read was the poems of the Carey Sisters. I selected a poem, and she read it at sight with fluency, appreciation, and appropriateness of expression. She read as naturally as a child, free from self-consciousness, speaks, and with the mental conceptions of a maturing mind. I was charmed and asked her to allow me to call my family to hear her read another poem. Again she shrank from the trial, but finally agreed when I assured her that she read better than any girl I had ever heard before. Again she read with ease and power. When she was reading her second poem two teachers called, one of them

a New York teacher who had studied under one of the leading teachers of oratory in the United States, and had read in public herself. I persuaded my pupil to read again a third selection, and they agreed with me that they had never heard any student whose reading was in all essential elements so satisfactory.

Note 2. The best oral reader of Goethe's Faust or other difficult literature that it was ever my good fortune to hear was the late George Paxton Young, professor of Philosophy in Toronto University. He gave new meaning to an author when he read aloud to his friends. I asked him if he had a good teacher of oral reading when he was a boy. He told me that he never read aloud at school. His great power of expression resulted from two causes: he had more power than most men to see the author's thought accurately and comprehensively, and the natural relation between thought and expression had not been interfered with by his teachers. I found by carefully watching him on many occasions that in silent reading, either of easy or difficult reading matter, he read at least two pages while I could read one, and he found more in each page than I did.

Note 3. When I was a boy thirteen years old, my father was the teacher of our village school. Two deaf-mute children were brought to the school, and my father, having so much to do in teaching a large ungraded school, could not possibly find time to teach them, so he turned them over to me. I taught them and attended to my own lessons as well, so the deaf-mute boys did not receive a great deal of attention. They knew the double hand alphabet, having been taught it by their mother. I learned their manual alphabet, and I laid the apperceptive

centres of all the best things I have since learned about pedagogy and psychology in my efforts to find the way to reach their minds and educate them. They learned to read visible language with remarkable ease, and they became very rapid readers. They could read much more rapidly than their companions in school or their brothers and sisters who could hear and speak. They learned to read, not to read orally.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

THE fundamental laws to be followed in teaching reading are the same general laws that should guide the teacher in teaching any other subject.

1. *Self-activity.* The most important principle to follow in teaching any subject is the law of self-activity. Self-activity means the activity of the pupil in independent work. It does not mean activity in imitating the teacher, or in following the instructions of the teacher or even the direct suggestions of the teacher. It means the activity of the pupil in accomplishing his own plans, in solving problems he has found for himself. The teacher can find no other test to decide the real value of her teaching in any subject, that is so simple and so definitely accurate as the question—Am I allowing my pupils the fullest opportunities for independent activity, which is the only real self-activity? The answer to this question should change the ordinary methods of teaching reading in all departments.

The development of every teacher towards her best power in method is made by taking progressive steps in giving the children more and more independent work in finding and solving problems. Every time a teacher finds a way to reach a definite result by less work on her part and more vital work on the part of the pupils, she has taken a step in the path of true progress. The child's real growth

must be the result of self-activity, his independent effort to solve his own problems. The teacher's highest skill lies in guiding his efforts without making him conscious of her interference. The wisdom of the teacher is essential in directing the immature minds of her pupils, but true wisdom never stands in the way of the self-activity of the child. The wisest teacher never forgets that the child, and not the knowledge he is to receive, is the centre of correlation. Responsive activity is better than mere passivity on the part of the pupil, because it develops a more practical and effective type of character than mere receptivity, but activity in response to the suggestions or directions of another does little to develop the individuality or selfhood in a child and this is the great ideal of true education.

2. *Problems.* The child's power in any subject increases most rapidly and most definitely by overcoming a related sequence of well graded difficulties; by solving a well arranged series of increasingly difficult problems. Problems in word recognition may be given as definitely and as systematically as in arithmetic or any other department of mathematics or science. The good teacher will use the largest possible variety of plans for making problems, and the ideal teacher always trains her pupils to find problems as well as to solve them. All children who have not been dwarfed by the unwise interference of their parents or teachers have the power to discover problems. The child's intellectual growth is so marvellously rapid before he goes to school because he has the privilege of finding most of his own problems. He is in a new world which is full of mysterious joys to him. If he is free, he finds many new problems every day. Most of them

he solves himself; a few of the more complex he brings to mother or father. He has naturally the power to see the problems related to his stage of development. His problems may be divided into two classes: those seen generally by nearly all children and those seen only or most clearly by children of his special intellectual organization and tendencies. Before he goes to school he is a problem finder as well as a problem solver. His power to solve problems becomes more effective as his power to see problems grows more definite. His power to solve problems does not increase so rapidly or so truly by solving the problems of others as by solving his own. Speaking generally, the least effective problems for a child are those prepared by an adult. When the child goes to school his teacher usually makes him a problem solver only, and thus his power of discovering problems is lost to an appalling extent. The power of seeing new problems is the most essential power in complete intellectual development. It alone starts the other intellectual powers and keeps them in vigorous and developing activity. It provides the necessary work for the other intellectual powers. It should develop as rapidly as any other intellectual power till in adulthood it becomes insight or vision in relation to the material, the intellectual and the spiritual world. The teacher should aim to develop this power of problem finding as definitely as any other power of the child. Unfortunately it usually decreases as the child grows older. The schools have dissolved the natural and essential unity between problem finding and problem solving, and have made the child a problem solver only.

But in reading the child has not even been allowed to *solve* problems. He has been expected to re-

member what his teacher has told him. Remembering and recalling is not a very developing exercise. It is a storing exercise that produces its best results when it acts naturally, as the indirect or incidental accompaniment of action which has been originated, directed, and executed by the individual himself who is expected to remember. Every subject should be learned so far as possible by operative processes, both problem finding and problem solving. To make reading largely a direct memory process robs it of its general developing power for the mind; makes even memorizing a slow and wearisome task, instead of a vital, definite, and interesting process; prevents the development of a true interest in reading; and reduces the rate of reading, and the power to get thought accurately and comprehensively from visible language.

In learning to read the child should be guided to the recognition of a progressive series of definitely related problems, and trained from the first day to solve these problems independently. Learning to read should not be a process of remembering and recognizing word forms, or letter forms. It should be a process of gaining power to use the elements of visible speech either by recognizing their sounds in word combinations, or in constructing visible words to represent the sound words with which the pupils are already familiar. These processes will at first be performed by conscious effort, but they should gradually become automatic and be directed by the subconscious power of the child. The recognition and solving of problems is the only way in which the pupil can use his self-activity in learning to read.

There are two classes of problems in word recog-

nition, eye problems and ear problems. Reading has been taught exclusively as an *eye* problem. The pupils have been shown letters, or words, or phrases, or sentences on the blackboard or tablet, or in the primer, and trained to recognize them by some of the various methods of teaching word recognition. There is another and a much better way of presenting the problems to the child for his solution. The usual plan is for the teacher to write the words or sentences and ask the pupil to sound them; it is much better for the teacher to sound the words and for the pupils to write them. Both plans should, of course, be used, but the *ear* problem in which the problem reaches the child's mind through his ear, is much more productive of good results than the *eye* problem in which the problem reaches the child's mind through his eye. In an ear problem the child has to make a more definite and comprehensive association of the form of a letter with its power or sound than he does in an eye problem. In the ear problem in word recognition the teacher pronounces the word as in dictating for spelling, carefully selecting only words whose visible symbols have already been taught, and the child has to think of the consecutive sounds in the word and associate the proper letter with each sound in successive order to form the visible word. In the eye problem the child looks at each letter or word as it is presented to him in written or printed forms, and unites the sounds of the letters to make the oral word represented by the visible forms.

The teaching work while the pupils are out in class should consist mainly of *ear* problems; the work of pupils at the seats must, in the early stage of learning to read, be largely the solving of *eye* problems.

Very soon, however, the best seat problems in word recognition are problems in the expression in visible form of the child's own thoughts. The construction of visible language by the child in *ear* problems or *self-expression* problems is very much more effective than the ordinary process which consists entirely of recognition of visible language or *eye* problems; because the child's powers of recognition, relation, construction, and origination are more extensively and more effectively called into activity by the ear and expression problems than by eye problems.

It will be of great service to the teacher, if she keeps persistently in mind the classification of the problems in the early steps in learning to read, into problems in *construction* and problems in *recognition*. Problems in construction are more vitally effective than problems in recognition in all subjects. Whenever it is possible, not only in reading but in all subjects, the child's thought should be constructively represented by the child himself in order to secure clearer and more extended thought and more perfect and more lasting remembrance. This fundamental thought will transform the methods of teaching nearly all subjects when it is clearly understood by teachers. Reading is one of the subjects in which it should make most radical changes.

3. *Interest.* Truly productive attention depends on the interest of the child. The only interest that retains its vitality is interest based on the child's happiness in solving new problems adapted to its stage of development and its knowledge. The child never loses interest when he is overcoming difficulties of an appropriate kind by his own independent efforts. The processes of teaching word recognition afford excellent opportunities for leading the child

to recognize and solve constructive problems of unfailing interest.

4. *Repetition of process.* The repetition that has been insisted upon, and is still planned for by many excellent teachers, is the frequent presentation of the same words in order that they may be readily recognized by the pupils. This is the weakest and least productive kind of repetition. It depends on mere memory cultivation as the means of making progress. No method that makes memory the central and direct element in learning can long sustain the vital interest of children in any subject.

The teacher should be guided by principles directly opposed to the time-honored method of frequent use of the same words in order that the pupils may learn to recognize them without conscious effort. If possible the same word should never be seen twice by the pupil while he is gaining the power of word recognition. Instead of repeating the same words frequently in order that the child may become familiar with them the teacher should aim to present entirely new words to the child, while it is learning the process of word recognition. The recognition of each word should be achieved by the child at first by a conscious process of uniting the powers and sounds of letters in new combinations. This is repetition of processes and not merely recognition by memory. This method develops constructive power, not memory only, and at the same time it is the most effective way of developing a productive memory. The pupil should not merely recognize the words, he should recognize them as the result of a constructive effort. He should independently recognize new words, that is words that are new to him in their visible form. Learning to read is not

learning to use a new vocabulary; it is acquiring the power to recognize in visible form the vocabulary with which the child is familiar in speech.

The effort at uniting individual powers and sounds into combinations to form words must at first be made slowly and consciously, and will require the full primary attention of the child. It gradually becomes rapid and automatic, and this stage is reached much sooner than inexperienced teachers would expect. Repetition of process makes the pupil an independent solver of interesting problems from the beginning, and at each step he gains consciousness of new power.

Many teachers who aim to teach word recognition by a correct method, make the serious mistake of having their pupils repeat and re-repeat the powers and sounds of letters as independent powers and sounds. They often keep lists of the letters already taught on the blackboard for drill purposes in order to fix the powers and sounds in the memories of the children. This kind of drill in any subject is purely mechanical. It deadens interest and even fails to fix facts or elements of power in the memory in a vital or productive way. There are two ways of defining truths in the memory. One defines them as facts only, the other defines them as elements of power for constructive use.

All mere drill in the facts or tables of any subject is comparatively ineffective even for memorizing facts or tables, when compared with the method of using facts or tables as they become known in the accomplishment of definite and interesting purposes by the pupils.

To become familiar with the powers and sounds of the letters in the quickest, surest, and most produc-

tive way, the child should use them as soon as he learns them in recognizing new visible forms of words, and especially in making words himself. This is a repetition of processes, and not a repetition of a mere act of memory. What is learned in this way is not merely stored in the memory, it becomes a part of the child's life power.

By persistently using the self-activity of the child in discovering and solving problems in word recognition, the work of investigation, discovery and mastery in achieving conquests over the difficulties of learning to read never loses interest, never becomes monotonous, but is always full of the vital interest that keeps the child alert, and hopeful, and happy.

CHAPTER IV

OBJECTIVE METHODS OF TEACHING WORD RECOGNITION

Is there a logical parallel between learning to use oral language and learning to recognize visible language? Many teachers claim that there is such a parallel. "The logical sequence in learning oral language is: first, the object; second, the idea; third, the word; therefore the same order should be followed in learning to read written or printed language." This has been adopted by many teachers as the philosophical basis of their methods of teaching primary classes to read, or more correctly speaking, of teaching the recognition of visible language. The following are among the objections that may be urged against the acceptance of this as a safe basis for the establishment of a logical parallelism between the mental operations of a child in acquiring the power of oral language, and in learning to recognize language in its visible forms:

1. Oral language is a new language to the child, when he is learning to use it. Visible language is not a new language. In any of its forms visible language is simply a means of representing the oral language with which the child is already familiar. In learning to read, the child is not acquiring new names or terms for either things or ideas. The words in written or printed language are identical

with the words of spoken language. Oral and visible language are not two different languages, but one language with two modes of expression or representation, one recognizable through the ear, and the other, through the eye. Reading is the art of extracting thought from visible language. He is a perfect reader who can acquire thought from visible language as rapidly, as definitely, and as comprehensively as from oral language.

2. The conceptions expressed by oral language are new to the child, when he learns the oral language with which to express them. The conceptions expressed or represented by visible language are not new. They cannot be new. A word representing an object or conception with which the child is not acquainted suggests no idea to his mind. The ideas recalled to the mind of the child by visible language must have been in his mind previously, or they could not be recalled. The thought and the language must have been learned before a pupil can recognize them in visible form. The thought and the language remain unchanged. In learning to read there is not new thought to require a new language, therefore the new form of the language cannot be learned as the oral form was learned, in direct association with, and as the natural psychological result of, the association of new words with the revelation of new thought by new objects and experiences. There can be no vital psychological relationship between learning to express thought by oral language and learning to recognize thought in visible language.

3. Language lessons should not be confounded with reading lessons. Learning to read is not a means of extending a child's vocabulary. Reading will enlarge the child's vocabulary, but the process

of learning to read cannot do so. He may extend his knowledge and his control of language by reading, but not by *learning to read.*

Even those methods of teaching reading that present objects to the child which he has never seen before; strange insects, animals or flowers, for instance, in order to try to be logical in the hopeless task of making the process of learning to read analogous to the process of learning oral language, fail to make their method of learning to read the source of increased acquaintance with language. The few words that may be learned in this cumbersome and illogical way are learned not by the reading process but by the associated objective process.

It is impossible to teach reading by using new things, and acts, and qualities, and relationships as the basis of the language to be read. The child is already perfectly familiar with the use of most of the language that must be used when it is learning to read; and even if an entirely new language could be used while learning to read, the plan proposed for teaching this new language is the least effective, the most unnatural, and most illogical that could be adopted.

The child's vocabulary should be increased by systematic language lessons. It will also be necessary to explain to him the meaning and use of some of the words in his reading lesson. Such explanations are in reality not a part of the reading lesson proper. New words—words which the child has not been in the habit of using orally—should not at first form part of the visible language he is learning to recognize. When he recognizes a new visible form it should mean something to him. It should recall an idea formerly represented by some oral word. The

child when learning to read should not be allowed to try to read any word in visible language until he is familiar with its meaning and use in oral language. But language lessons and reading lessons should not be confounded.

4. Oral language is a natural means of communicating the child's thought to others; visible language in all its forms is artificial. All children who are not deaf learn to speak without direct training. They not only use articulate language naturally, but acquire the names of things and the forms of expression used by those with whom they live without direct teaching. No thoughtful parent ever gave his child a lesson on the names of things, by saying: "This is a cup, or a spoon, or a doll, or a chair," while pointing to the things named in order that he might learn the names of the things he had to use. Such absurd teaching has been practised only in schools.

Children use oral language naturally, and learn names of things and language forms naturally. They learn correct language just as readily as incorrect language, if they hear it spoken correctly. Correct construction and correct pronunciation are as easily learned as incorrect construction and pronunciation. If children have definite ideas their language will be correspondingly definite. They learn with equal facility the oral language used by those with whom they associate, English, French, German, etc., as the case may be.

Oral language, being natural, is learned without conscious effort. Visible language, being artificial, has to be learned by a conscious effort. The process of making this conscious effort is not logically re-

lated to the natural process of acquiring a means of expressing thought.

5. When using oral language thought suggests words; in reading, words suggest thought. In oral language the idea must precede the word, because oral language is a means of expressing thought, and a thought cannot be expressed until it has been conceived. As the clearest conceptions come to children from real things, the logical order in learning spoken language is naturally object, idea, word. All these conditions are reversed in reading and therefore the process of learning to read cannot logically be the same as the process of learning to talk, or even parallel with it and in the same direction.

It is quite true that visible language, like oral language, is the expression of thought, but reading is the recognition of thought and not the expression of thought. This should be a sufficient reason to show the impossibility of basing a method of recognition on a method of expression, especially when in one case it is an *expression* of *oral* language, which is learned unconsciously, and in the other case it is the *recognition* of *visible* language, which is not a natural form of language and which must be recognized by conscious effort on the part of the child. In reading, the idea is conceived through the word, not the word from the idea, so we must begin with the word instead of ending with it. Of course we cannot get an idea from a word unless we had the idea before, and had it in association with the oral word to which the visible word we are reading corresponds. Words do not create ideas in the minds of children learning to read; they recall ideas already in their minds, and the process of reading consists in looking at words and recognizing through them the

mental pictures they represent. It is true that the child when older should get many revelations of new facts and new ideals from visible language by reading, but reading should not be confounded with learning to read. Even when reading, however, the reader must understand the meaning of the author's words before he can understand the author's ideals. Words in reading should recall conceptions already in the mind. The process of reading intelligently consists in looking at words and recognizing through them the mental pictures they represent. This is true of words, of sentences, of chapters, and of books. The only possible order in reading is from the word or sentence to the thought, and any process that reverses this essential order retards the progress of the child in learning to read.

The teachers should most carefully avoid the possibility of suggesting the word by the thing or the conception the word represents, while the pupil is learning to recognize visible language. To do so will interfere with the essential and logical process by which the child should be acquiring power to translate visible language into oral language and ultimately to be able to extract thought automatically from visible language as well as from oral language.

6. The child has to deal solely with words, not objects, in reading, when he is able to read, and therefore our aim should be to give him the mastery over the recognition of words as early as possible. A child can read well, when he is able to extract thought automatically and rapidly from printed or written matter. The teacher's first aim should be to make word recognition automatic. When this is accomplished the child is able to give his full mental

power to the recognition of thought. So long as any part of his attention has to be given to the recognition of words, he cannot give his whole mind to the recognition of thought.

The power to recognize words automatically should be developed, as all power must be developed, by repetition of the necessary processes, slowly and consciously at first, but with increasing rapidity until it becomes free and automatic. An object should never be used to suggest the name of a visible word. Reading is not a means of obtaining thought from objects. Reading is not the recognition of words suggested by objects or by any other way of producing thought. Reading is a process of recognizing words through their own forms and construction. The recognition is the first and not the last step in reading; and to make it the last step instead of the first step reverses the essentially logical order of development. The use of the object to suggest the recognition of the visible word directly interferes with the development of the power that is absolutely necessary in the recognition of words independently. It retards both the immediate and the ultimate progress of the child. Object lessons are very useful when properly taught, but they cannot be made reading lessons. Reading cannot be confined to object lessons, or to recognizing words suggested by objects. The chief aim of the object lesson is to give power to gain new knowledge from things. The aim of the reading lesson is to give power to extract thought from visible language.

7. The strongest argument in favor of the use of objects in connection with the reading lesson is based on the absolute necessity for a direct and strong bond of association between the idea and the

word which represents it. The importance of this association cannot be too strongly emphasized. The misapplication of this correct principle will be evident, however, if we remember that in learning to read the child is not learning a new language, but merely gaining power to recognize in a new form the language he already uses freely. The essential association between words and their corresponding ideas becomes definite, when the child is learning to speak, and the only step left for the teacher to take is to make the association rapid and definite between the spoken word and the printed or written word which is the visible representation of the spoken word which the child already understands and uses. The child cannot read intelligently, either silently or aloud, language which he does not speak intelligently. He should not be allowed to try to do so. The child's spoken language corresponds with his ideas, and when he hears it used it recalls these ideas to his mind. He should not try to have two ways of recognizing an idea through language till its recognition is accurate and automatic in one way. The oral way of expressing and recognizing ideas is the natural way and should precede the visible method.

The child begins the process of learning to read with a very large number of conceptions which are represented by him and to him in his spoken language by corresponding words. Each conception instantly suggests its appropriate word when he is speaking; each spoken word suggests its corresponding idea when some one else is speaking to him. The conception recalls the object because it is the mental picture of the object. The following is a logical sequence:

1st. The object—hat.
2nd. The idea—hat.
3rd. The spoken word—hat.
4th. The visible word—hat.

The child is thoroughly acquainted with the first three steps in this sequence before he begins to learn to read. Logically the first two steps are one so far as reading is concerned. Any one of the first three steps instantly recalls the other two to the child without any conscious effort on his part. If we try to take the fourth step before the first three are definitely associated with one another, our course is illogical.

The only question to be decided by the teacher is, with which of the first three steps can the fourth —the visible word—be most easily, most naturally, and most philosophically associated? The answer to this question will be definitely settled as soon as we decide to which of the other three steps the visible word is most perfectly related. We can have no difficulty in reaching a decision. There can be no direct relationship between the shape of a hat and the visible word "hat," nor between our mental picture of a hat and the visible word "hat." No relationship whatever exists, or was intended to exist by those who planned our visible language. Our language is not a system of hieroglyphics. Every means used to make our language visible in any form, is based on the philosophical plan of the representation of the individual sounds of spoken language by corresponding visible signs. The founders of our system of visible language knew that there are only a few sounds in our spoken language, and only a few methods for combining and uttering them, so they wisely decided to design a series of letters to

represent in visible form the sounds of oral language and the formations of the organs of speech used in uttering these sounds. It was with this manifest and definite purpose that alphabets were constructed.

Visible language is therefore directly and philosophically related to spoken language, and as soon as the relationships between their corresponding elements have been definitely established in the child's mind, the one form of language becomes convertible into the other by a regular and logical process, that is performed slowly and by conscious effort at first but which soon becomes automatic. On the other hand the association of the visible word with the object or idea directly is necessarily an arbitrary process and must inevitably remain an arbitrary process with no logical basis whatever. A great many ingenious plans have been adopted to simplify this arbitrary process, and to try to make it conform to natural laws, but however beautifully it may be clothed or padded, its natural deformity cannot be concealed. It must remain an arbitrary process to the end.

The case, therefore, stands clearly thus: the first three steps in the sequence are indissolubly bound together in the child's mind before he goes to school, or begins to learn to read. The first two, the object and the idea, are really one so far as reading is concerned. These two on one hand, and the spoken word on the other hand, are automatically intersuggestive. Our problem in reading is to make the very same word in another form recall or suggest the very same idea that has regularly been brought to the child's mind by the spoken word. This must be done by giving the child the power to make the visible word suggest the oral word which always nat-

urally recalls the corresponding idea or object; and all attempts to associate the visible word with the object or idea by direct process are necessarily illogical and interfere with the essential and logical association of the visible forms of speech with the oral forms which they were intended to represent.

Questions in regard to the alphabet and improvements that might have been made or may yet be made in its construction have no real bearing on the logical method of training a child to recognize visible language. Whether the difficulties arising from an imperfect alphabet be few or many, the child's problem remains logically unaltered and unalterable. He can read when he has in some way learned to translate the visible forms of language into their corresponding forms in spoken language, and to recognize the combinations of visible forms as representing the union of sounds to form the words used in oral language.

If there were not overwhelming reasons to show that all objective methods of teaching pupils to read are illogical, there is an insurmountable practical difficulty that makes it impossible to carry out the method beyond a very limited range of words. Only a few objects can possibly be directly associated with visible words in the schoolroom, but all objects and ideas must be represented in visible language.

8. Expression of thought and recognition of forms of thought have been confounded by those who advocate the same process of learning to speak and learning to read. They are not similar processes psychologically. In the *expression* of thought the thing and its name are mutually intersuggestive in both spoken and written language. This is not the case in the *recognition* of visible language. In recog-

nition the name recalls the object much more certainly than the object suggests its name. We look at thousands of objects every day, and even use them, without being conscious of the fact that they have names at all. Objects were not made for names, names were made for objects.

These considerations show that it is unphilosophical to use the object as a means of suggesting the name of a word, so as to aid in recognizing it. The name should be recognized independently, and in the practice of reading it must be recognized independently. It is the duty of the teacher to see that the words recognized recall corresponding ideas in the child's mind, but the first association of ideas with words should not be made through visible language, and therefore this part of the teacher's work is not connected directly with the process of learning to read.

9. But it is claimed that the association of the spoken word with the idea was arbitrary and yet it was accomplished in a natural and definite way, and that it therefore follows that the visible word should be directly associated with the idea through the object in a similar manner. This really means that the names of objects can be associated with the objects through the eye as naturally and as readily as through the ear. This is clearly an illogical assumption for several reasons. First, spoken language is natural and visible language is not natural. The eye has in a sense a language of its own, but this language is limited in its range and application. It is manifestly absurd to assume that a race gifted with the power of hearing and with the wonderful power of speech could learn the names of objects as readily through the eye as through the ear.

Spoken language is learned incidentally without direct effort of any kind on the part either of the child or its parents. The child learns the language of its parents and speaks it as accurately as they do, without any attempt at teaching by the parents or study by the child. The ear is the natural organ through which language power is acquired and developed. Second, it is impossible to have the visible names of all things attached to or directly associated with them. Third, if every object had its name written or printed on it, the idioms of language would still be lacking. Fourth, in order to communicate through the eye by language every individual would have to carry with him a complete set of words or the means of making them.

10. The ablest advocates of the object-word method do not really accept it themselves in practice, except for a short period and within a very limited range of words. This is the most peculiar fact in connection with the whole range of the literature written about methods of learning to read. Men write elaborate theories to prove that the whole word method is the proper one, and having established what they regard as a philosophical basis for their method, they immediately repudiate it by limiting its application to a comparatively insignificant number of words. Some use their method for only about sixty words. Very few now suggest its use for more than two hundred words. But even if it were philosophical in its application to a small number of words, as its advocates claim, its pedagogical value would be too insignificant to make it a worthy foundation for a method of training a child to read.

The sum of the whole matter is this:—oral language is the expression of thought, reading is the

recognition of thought expressed in visible form. When the child is using oral language his thought suggests his language, when he is reading, the language suggests the thought. When the child begins to learn to read, he has already learned his language. Reading is not a method of learning a new language, but of recognizing the child's own language in a new form, and therefore it follows that an analogy between the process of learning to speak and learning to read cannot be logically sustained.

CHAPTER V

THE PHONIC METHOD

To become capable of reading independently the child must in some way gain a mastery of the powers and sounds of the letters, and of the laws by which they are combined to form the words of our language. He must know that some letters always say the same thing, and that others do not always say the same thing; that some letters always speak in the words in which they occur, and that others sometimes speak and are sometimes silent. He must in short acquire in some way the power to translate the visible forms of language into oral language, and recognize visible words as representing the ideas already represented in his mind by spoken words, so that in time by practice and experience he may be able to extract thought from visible language definitely, comprehensively, and rapidly. Perfect reading power will be acquired when the race can get thought as fully and as definitely from printed language as from oral language. In order to do this the child must acquire the power of automatic word recognition through ability to combine the sounds and powers of letters into words. This necessarily requires that the child must know, consciously or unconsciously, what the powers and sounds of the letters are, or what the letters say.

It matters not how the child has been taught word

recognition, by the alphabetic, the phonic, the phonetic, the word or the sentence method, or by any combinations or extensions of these methods, when he has learned to recognize new words independently he has in some way gained the power of automatically associating the letter forms with the various positions of the vocal organs in producing oral language. When a word begins with b, p, or m, he must automatically shut his lips instantly in order to begin to read it; if it begins with s, he must begin instantly to force air over his lifted tongue and past his upper teeth so as form a hissing sound; if it begins with t, d, or n, he must intantly place the point of his tongue against the roof of his mouth near his upper teeth; and so on with all the other letters. As soon as he sees them, his organic formation of lips, tongue and teeth, changes to correspond with the powers, or sounds, they represent. This must be done by whatever system he has learned word recognition. If we see a word which we have never seen before we construct it just as readily as if we were familiar with it. If, for instance we met with the word "plobfantsdem," (a word form made for the illustration) we instantly perform a successive series of rapid organic formations and make certain sounds so that the whole unites to form what we call a word. These formations of the vocal organs and these sounds made by the vocal chords must follow in definite order, or the word will not be correctly formed and sounded. In speaking this word we make eleven changes in organic construction—lips closed, tongue against roof of mouth, mouth open, lips closed, upper teeth on lower lip, mouth open, tongue against roof of mouth near teeth, tongue near the roof of mouth, tongue against roof of mouth near teeth, mouth open, lips

closed. There are only eleven formations for twelve letters because "n" and "t" come together and they require the same organic construction. The tongue, throat and lips modify the open mouth so as to form different sounds for "a," "e," and "o." The word begins and ends with the lips closed, but in the one case no sound is made, while in the other case a sound is made which is allowed to pass out through the nose. The letter "b" orders the lips to be closed as in the case of "p" and "m." Like "m," "b" makes a sound, but the sound of "b" is not allowed to pass out. The letters "d," "n," and "t," require the same organic construction; "t" asks no sound; "n" and "d" demand that a sound be made. In the case of "n" the sound is allowed to pass through the nose; in the case of "d" the sound is not allowed to pass out at all. In the case of "l," a sound escapes between the tongue and the roof of the mouth; "f" and "s" order breath alone to escape,—in the first case, between the teeth and the lower lip, and in the second case, between the tongue and the roof of the mouth and past the ends of the upper teeth.

Every one, by whatever method he learned word recognition, obeys the instructions or signals given by the letters in this word, if he can read. The letters in the alphabet are really a set of shorthand symbols representing a corresponding set of sentences. The symbol "m" says, "shut your lips, make a sound, and allow it to pass through your nose." The symbol "v" says, "put your upper teeth on your lower lip, make a sound, and let it escape through your mouth." The symbol "s" says, "put your tongue near the roof of your mouth and force a stream of breath, without voice, over the tongue and past the ends of the upper teeth." The symbol "f"

gives the same order as "v," but it asks for breath only, instead of voice; and the symbol "z" gives exactly the same order as "s" only it requires voice, instead of breath, to be sent over the tongue and past the teeth, and so on through the alphabet. Learning to recognize words—what is commonly called "learning to read"—really means learning to interpret the meaning of the letter signals and to combine the formative results rapidly, and ultimately automatically.

No one pretends that the recognition of all the words in our reading must depend on memory of all the word forms. Whatever method of recognizing words has been used, the reader must have gained automatic control of the powers and sounds of the letters and their various modifications in combination. Every letter in "plobfantsdem" must be sounded or formed in regular order, or the word is not correctly spoken. The letters are simply shorthand methods of giving instructions for organic construction, for making and modifying sounds, and for issuing these sounds, or breath alone, through the prepared mouth or nose, when the organic constructions are made.

The best method of teaching word recognition is the one which most easily, most quickly, and most thoroughly makes the child acquainted with the sounds and powers of the letters and trains him to combine them into word sounds, if at the same time it fulfils the fundamentally essential conditions of the self-activity of the child, problem finding and problem solving by the child, the preservation and development of the child's interest, and repetition of the processes by which words are recognized, and not repetition of mere word forms to be mem-

orized as word forms. The child will learn to recognize words by any method that may be adopted, but some method must fulfil the conditions specified more perfectly than the others. The method that most completely realizes these conditions must be the best method to use. The chief purpose of this book is to prove that the phonic method, in harmony with true pedagogic principles, is the best method of enabling the child to recognize words definitely and rapidly.

Little need be said to prove that the alphabetic, or letter-naming, method is not a good method. While it in a sense co-ordinates reading with spelling it is an ineffective method of teaching both subjects; and as a means of teaching reading it is absolutely without any logical basis, as in nearly all the words of the language there is no relationship whatever between the sounds of the words and the names of the letters of which they are composed.

All the methods that lead the child to recognize the powers and sounds of letters through the use of words in association with objects; or by writing on the board words or short sentences used by the children about objects, or experiences, or myths, or stories, or nursery rhymes or anything else, however interesting the subjects may be; or by giving the children, either in books, or in writing on the blackboard, familiar nursery rhymes or similar selections to read which have first been accurately memorized, and which are to be repeated as they look at the words which represent in visible form the words they already use freely orally; in short all the methods that reveal letter powers and sounds by analytic processes are unnecessarily slow, and they fail in the most essential requirements of high educational value

in the general development of the child's powers. They do not make him self-active; they do not give opportunities either for finding, or solving, problems, and they depend on memory and not on operative processes for the development of the child's power. These are sufficiently vital reasons for rejecting a method of teaching any subject, or developing any power. Even if such a method were the quickest method of learning a subject or of acquiring a power, it should not be practised. But the teacher never has to choose between the most rapid method and the most truly pedagogical method. The method that is based on the truest pedagogy is certain to secure the most rapid learning and the most thorough and the most vital development in any subject.

There is another fundamental objection to all analytic methods of learning word recognition. While a limited number of words may be learned as whole words, the pupil, as soon as he begins to read independently, must recognize all new words by a constructively synthetic process. No one pretends that all words can be, or ought to be, memorized by the pupils. The great body of words in any language must be recognized independently by the child. The advocates of analytic, or whole-word, methods of any kind really claim that analytic methods of learning word recognition are the best methods of developing independent power of synthetic recognition, which is the only possible process by which we can recognize new words.

When all must learn, in some way, the powers and sounds of letters, in order to read independently, and recognize words whose names they have not memorized, it should not require much argument to prove that the method which aims to give the child a defi-

nite and ready acquaintance with these sounds and powers must be the best, if it conforms with the fundamental laws of true pedagogy, and is therefore adapted to the stage of the child's development. The phonic method is the only method that fulfils these conditions completely. Of course the phonetic method would fulfil these conditions also, if our language had a strictly phonetic alphabet. It is usual to object to the phonic method because the English alphabet is not a phonetic alphabet. This is not a valid objection, however, because it is possible even with our imperfect alphabet to use a perfectly self-consistent language in which the pupils will be given only one sound for each letter, while they are learning all the processes of word recognition. There are enough words in the child's vocabulary in which the vowels have but one sound and the variant consonants but one power, to give all the variety necessary in the words to be constructed or recognized by the child, while he is learning the process of word recognition. When the child has acquired the process of word recognition with a self-consistent alphabet, his teacher has only to reveal to him the fact that certain letters do not always say the same thing, and to teach him their variations and a few principles underlying these variations, in order to qualify him to read his own oral vocabulary in its completeness. It is not necessary to use diacritical marks or variations of form of the letters to enable the child to sound the words correctly. A few fundamental laws of variation will guide him to the common irregularities that may be accounted for in a systematic way, and the law of association with the context will enable him to overcome the other irregularities. In reading the sentence, "The cat

sat on the table," for instance, even before the child has learned that "a" does not always say the same thing, no reasonably bright child would give the same sound to "a" in "cat" and "table." The adjusting power of the child through association of ideas is practically unlimited, when the words he has to read are words of his own regular vocabulary used in simple sentences; and no reasonable teacher ever uses words that are not common to a child's vocabulary, when the child is learning to read.

Lack of faith in the adjusting and relating power of the child has led most advocates of the phonic method to construct various devices of a more or less intricate and confusing character to represent all the sounds and consonantal variations of our language. Such devices interfere with the child's progress, and some of them are so manifestly ridiculous that they have prejudiced thoughtful teachers against the phonic method. The only markings that should ever be used are the mark for the long vowels, and a stroke through a letter to show that it does not speak. These may be used with advantage for a short time, but only for a short time, when the pupil is receiving lessons from the blackboard.

The phonic method of teaching word recognition should not be confounded with phonic practice for correct pronunciation. Some advocates of the phonic method of teaching word recognition claim as one of the advantages of the method that it corrects provincialism by leading the children to give the strictly correct letter sounds in all words. This is claiming too much. It is quite true that learning word recognition by the phonic method gives a logical preparation for the practices which must be used later in correcting provincialisms in pronunciation caused by

giving wrong sounds to certain letters; but word recognition by the phonic method or by any other method will not cause the pupils to change their way of pronouncing words. Word recognition and phonic practice for pronunciation are distinct processes, so distinct, that for practical purposes, they are not directly related. Word recognition by the phonic method makes little, if any, change in the way the children pronounce their words. If two children have been accustomed to pronounce "blue," or "aunt," or "fast," or "calm" in two different ways they will continue to pronounce them in two different ways when they meet them in their reading lessons even though they have been taught word recognition by the phonic method. The power of recognition will not overcome habit, neither will the process by which the power of recognition is acquired. Word recognition simply gives a child the power to recognize, in visible form, the language he has been accustomed to use orally; and, if Tom has been accustomed to say "barl," and Jim to say "bar-rel," each of them will recognize in visible form the word he has been accustomed to use, and will read it accordingly till Tom is trained to do otherwise by specific practice in correct pronunciation. The child, in learning to read, uses the knowledge given him regarding the powers and sounds of the letters to enable him to construct or to recognize words, and not as a guide in pronouncing them. It is probable that in making the word "barrel" Tom would write "barl" because that represents his conception and his use of the word; and when corrected he would learn that he has been in the habit of mispronouncing the word. In a similar way, a London boy might learn that he has been mispronouncing words beginning with "v," or

that he has been misusing the letter "h." So far as any system aids in removing peculiarities of speech the phonic system may reasonably claim the advantage, especially, when the peculiarity depends on the misuse of consonants; but it is too much to claim for any method of teaching word recognition that it removes provincialisms in mispronunciation.

It has been stated that the phonic method interferes with the teaching of spelling. Compared with any whole word system the phonic method has the advantage on general principles. Spelling necessarily depends on accurate and definite power to see all the letters in a word and to see them in their properly related order. No whole word system can train the pupil to do this so thoroughly as a synthetic or constructive system must do it. The phonic system taught, as it should be taught, *chiefly by ear problems,* trains the pupil to be able to spell all regular words without any special lessons in spelling, and leaves only the spelling of the irregular words to be learned. Even in learning these, the pupil who has been trained to look definitely at each element in the word in order to recognize it must have the advantage. The efforts of the advocates of spelling reform, so far as they have been, or may yet be, successful, will give the pupil trained to recognize words by the phonic method more and more advantage in the department of spelling over those trained by any other method.

It is sometimes urged that the sounds of the letters are new to the child, and this is given as a reason for not using the phonic system. Novelty cannot be successfully used as an argument against the use of any method by a child. The child is interested in two classes of things: those with which he is familiar,

and those which are new to him; and his interest in both depends on their adaptation to his stage of development and the uses to which he can put them. Novelty of an appropriate kind always adds to a child's interest in a subject, or in the tools he must use in acquiring power.

"But the power and sounds of letters are unrelated abstractions to a child, and therefore the phonic method cannot be the right one for him. He should deal with real things, or with words that represent real things to him."

In a sense the powers and sounds of the letters are abstractions to the child, and this is one of many valid reasons for not teaching children to read when they are too young. It would be much better for their health and happiness as well as for their rapid and intelligent progress in reading, if they did not begin to learn to read till they were nine years old, or even older. They should hear a great deal of good literature appropriate to their stage of development before they are nine years of age. The most appropriate use of oral reading is when mother or father or teacher reads aloud to the children, and one of the errors of adulthood in the past has been to limit the kind of literature deemed suitable for children to stories or poems that may properly be called childish. Children of seven, eight, or nine, years of age are capable of enjoying and appreciating literature of a higher class than is usually read to them. But the time for the children to dig for themselves the treasures of literature should be delayed longer than it usually is. The child's life should be so full of play in its varied phases, of constructive experiments with the material things of his environment that he may become conscious of his own powers and

his capacity for transforming material things in harmony with his own plans, and of the joy of ever deepening and ever widening acquaintance with the mysteriously attractive processes of Nature, that he will not have any time left for reading till he is nine years of age.

But the letters and their sounds and powers should not remain abstractions to the child, and certainly they cannot continue to be unrelated. The letters should always be spoken of, to the children, as if they had personality. They should be represented as saying something, as speaking alone, as singing duets with other letters, or as keeping silence to listen to their other little comrades in the words, when they are not expected to speak themselves. This simple practice invests the letters with a real personal power, and arouses a vital interest in them on the part of the children. It adds to the interest, and aids in a natural classification of the letters to speak regularly to the children of the vowels as "girls," and of the consonants as "boys." The words "vowels" and "consonants" should of course not be used, but to have both "girl" letters and "boy" letters makes the personation more complete and more real, and prepares the way, lays the apperceptive basis, for a logical classification of the letters later. It adds greatly to the interest of the child in any subject to attribute personal power to inanimate things. The child's imagination continually associates the idea of life with inanimate things. A piece of stick readily becomes a mamma who tells endless stories to her stick children. A collection of sticks, or pins, or buttons, or even of marks in a row, will form an army of the bravest soldiers. The child's imagination vitalizes everything it touches with life.

The child creates his own environment, and sphere, and experiences, if he has favorable conditions, and if his child life is understood and reverenced by the adults with whom he lives. Too often the real child life is dwarfed by the interference of meddlesome adulthood. It will seem perfectly natural to the child to say to him "a" says, "b" says, "m" says, etc., and your statements will be strictly true.

"But as some of the letters do not always say the same thing it will confuse the child's mind to have to teach him this fact." It is a fact that some letters do not always say the same thing. The child must learn this when he learns to read, by whatever system he learns word recognition. It does not confuse him, or mystify him, or prevent the development of his reasoning power to find out that some letters can say more than one thing. He does not always say the same thing himself. Some of his friends can speak in two or more different languages. The letters that speak more than one language may be spoken of as better educated than the others and their peculiarity is at once accounted for to the child, if indeed their special power requires to be accounted for. The child's own way of accounting for things is usually entirely satisfactory to himself, and is generally the best way for him. We should account for things to him only when he asks for explanations of his mysteries. His mysteries are, generally, not those that suggest themselves to adult minds, and when he does ask for explanations, our explanations should be those that will satisfy the child mind, not necessarily those that would satisfy the adult mind.

"The children lose the opportunity for language development in connection with the reading lessons if they are taught by the phonic method." Oh, no!

The children are led to talk a great deal even while they are learning the powers and sounds of the letters and how to use them; and the phonic method much more quickly than any other method requires the writing of the pupil's own language in original work. No other method makes the independent construction of words and sentences such an essential part of the process of word recognition as the phonic method does, when properly used.

The reasons for using the phonic method are both educational and practical. They may be briefly stated as follows:

1. The child must possess phonic recognition power before he becomes independent in recognizing new words. Independent recognition power should be the aim of the teacher. We recognize new words through life by the phonic method only. Therefore the process that leads to independent automatic recognition power most quickly, and most definitely, is the best, provided that it at the same time affords the best opportunities for the development of the pupil's intellectual and moral powers.

2. The phonic method makes the pupil self-active from the first day. The teacher, of course, gives him the names and powers of the letters as he needs them, and as soon as he is acquainted with two of them he immediately begins to use them in making words. He is guided at first by his teacher in the performance of the simple steps necessary in the solution of his problems. It takes but a few days for him to become acquainted with the sounds and powers of the letters, and he uses each one as he learns it in connection with those already learned. From the first he is engaged in the solution of a progressive sequence of problems as definitely related as the

problems in arithmetic, or algebra, or any other science. He has two kinds of problems only to solve: ear problems and eye problems. In the ear problem the word is sounded for him to write; in the eye problem the word is written or printed for him to sound. The process of solution is the same for all ear problems; the process of solution in all eye problems is also the same. The child has to learn only two processes: the process of solving ear problems, and the process of solving eye problems. He performs both processes the first day. He performs them slowly, at first, and with conscious effort. His processes will be the same in the end, but he will then be able to perform them very rapidly and very definitely without conscious effort, and without giving his primary attention to them. The presentation of his new tools—the additional letter sounds and powers—is made gradually and as he is ready for them, and takes so little time that it scarcely needs to be taken into consideration. The great work to be achieved is the solution of ear problems and eye problems so frequently and in such varied forms that the child becomes capable, as soon as possible, of solving them rapidly and accurately, while giving his primary attention not to the word itself, nor to the sentence itself, but to the meaning of the word or the sentence.

During the whole of this progressive development the child is self-active and independent in his operative work. The teacher supplies him with the tools and tests his power to solve increasingly difficult problems. These increase in difficulty not because the process changes, but because the number of possible elements in the problem increases, as new letter sounds and powers are taught. The important

thing to remember is that the child is from the first day developing independent intellectual power which under proper guidance qualifies him for more rapid and more definite progress in his other departments of study, and for greater success in life.

The independent achievement of success in the solution of problems has a very important influence on the character of a child, by making him conscious of individual power, and laying the foundation for a vital faith in himself.

3. The child's work in learning word recognition by the phonic method is not the repetition of memory processes, but the repetition of operative processes of a constructive character. This is one of the most essential distinctions between the old and the new education in teaching all subjects. The child is not expected to memorize word forms, he is expected to recognize words by combining the sounds and powers of the letters of which they are composed. Memorizing words, or recognizing them because they are familiar or have been already taught is one of the things to be most carefully guarded against by the teacher. If possible the child should not see the same word twice when he is learning word recognition. He may of course use the same words in writing his own thought as often as he chooses without danger. Rapid recognition of words should not depend on the frequency with which the words are seen, but on increasing power to solve problems in word recognition. When a child repeats an operative process he has developed more power; when he recognizes a word which he has seen before and whose sound he has learned, he merely develops memory. By repetition of process he is acquiring ability to recognize and use his entire language; by

repetition of a word he is merely making more certain the recognition and use of one word, and possibly aiding in the recognition of a few others of which it forms a part.

4. The phonic method preserves and develops the child's interest. Children soon lose interest in things other people talk about. They lose interest in things other people do to instruct or even to amuse them. They lose interest in things other people show them. They lose interest, after a time, even in doing things themselves, when their work is planned by others—even by the wisest and the most attractive teacher in the world. But their interest increases in work of any kind appropriate to their stage of development and in which they are themselves allowed a fair share of the planning. The phonic method to a much greater degree than any other method of teaching word recognition provides the conditions of vital and sustained interest, because the child in learning by this method is more independent, more operative, and more self-active than in learning by any other method.

5. Letters are marks, and marks interest children only so far as they represent life, or can be used in some representative process. Children are interested in what things say, not in what they are named. Young children name cows, pigs, cats, dogs, etc., by what these animals say. They are not interested in them on account of their names, but on account of what they say, and they speak of them at first by imitating what they say, In the phonic method each letter is represented as saying something, and the children are at first required to personate the letters and to speak what the letter says. This adapts the

method to the child's nature, and increases his interest in the work of learning to read.

6. Knowledge is used as soon as it is obtained by the phonic method. The child spends no time in learning the alphabet before he begins to use it. He combines two letters as soon as he knows what they say. When he is introduced to another letter and knows what it says he can make and recognize more words. Each new letter increases his material for use, and he uses it at once in connection with what he has been using. The old methods of teaching not only reading but other subjects did a good deal of storing of the memory with tables and facts to be used, when the child was older. Power is always lost when the memory is loaded with knowledge beyond the child's power to use it.

7. The child fixes the sounds and powers of the letters in his memory by using them and not by drill. This is in harmony with one of the fundamental laws of the new education. Memorizing by drill or mere repetition of words or facts is the least effective way of committing to memory and the weakest method of developing general memory power. Some teachers of the phonic method drill regularly on lists of letters whose sounds and powers have been learned. This is a most uninteresting and most ineffective exercise. The children cannot be interested in it, and it is certain to lead them into wrong methods of giving the sounds and powers of the letters, especially of the consonants. Such practice does little to train the children to perform the operations necessary either in forming or in recognizing words. It is only by using the letter sounds and powers that they become fixed in the child's mind as available instruments in reading and writing. Too many things are

still stored in the memories of children by various processes of word or fact repetitions. Most of the things so stored in the memory remain in the memory and never get into the real executive intellectual life and power of the child as vital elements.

8. The phonic method requires the use of what has already been acquired in order to make a proper use of the new letter that is being taught. This is the only perfect way to review the work that has been taught in any subject. To review merely for the purpose of deepening the impression, or for the sake of the facts or the language is not good teaching. The highest kind of reviewing is done, when in taking a step in advance we require the use in some constructive work of what has already been learned. This should be done in teaching by the phonic method, and can be done only with the phonic or phonetic method.

9. The phonic method and the phonetic method, which in its operative processes and fundamental principles is exactly like the phonic method, are the only methods which make it possible to give the child constructive problems; and the solving of a properly related sequence of constructive problems is the surest, the most natural, the most logical, the most effective, and the most truly pedagogical method of teaching any subject which is adapted for such teaching. Word recognition, by the phonic method, is admirably adapted for constructive problem work by the child, and this is one of the strong reasons in favor of its adoption.

If the word "Sam" be shown to a child, on the blackboard or on a card, he is required by the phonic method to solve a problem which is presented through his eye. This problem requires ability to recall in

regular order the sounds of "s," "a," and "m," and unite them into one sound produced by a union of the three sounds produced so rapidly as to make them seem to be but one sound. The recognition of this word by any system except the phonic is purely an act of memory and not a constructive process. In ear problems, too, when the word is pronounced for the child and he has to make the visible form of the word out of the elements of sound and power that he has learned, he is solving a problem of a constructive character.

If a child, taught by any whole word system, or even by the alphabetic or naming system, be asked to write the word "Sam," he does it purely by memory and not as the result of an independent constructive process. When the child learning by the phonic method has learned the sounds of "a," "m," and "s," the teacher may very properly ask him to write the word Sam. This is an ear problem in word recognition, which is the first step in learning to read. The child cannot write it from memory because he has never yet consciously seen the word he is expected to write. If he has accidentally seen the word he has no idea of its name. He has a real problem to solve. First, he must analyze the word into its three elements by sounding it slowly, and as he analyzes he must remember the letter symbol that corresponds to each sound and write these letter symbols in their proper order to form the word.

In both eye and ear problems, the child is doing productive and constructive work, and such problems cannot be given by any other method of teaching children to read. Both kinds of problems are of great value, but especially the ear problems.

10. The phonic method co-ordinates reading,

writing, spelling and composition, more naturally, and more logically, than any other method. The ear problems train children to construct the spelling of all regular words and also of those words that have only regular irregularities in their spelling. Spelling reform is gradually removing the worst irregularities. Writing may be used in connection with the teaching of reading by any method, but the phonic method calls upon the child to write his own thoughts much sooner than is possible by any other method.

11. The phonic method aids in securing distinct articulation in speaking. Each letter is expected to do its part in making the word. The child finds by his entire experience in learning to read that every letter, not silent, must be sounded, or the word will be imperfect.

12. The phonic method prepares the child for learning to understand and to write shorthand when he is older. This is becoming a more important educational feature, and it will become more and more important in future.

There are a few words such as "eight" that cannot be taught by the phonic method. Their number is so small that they are not worthy of consideration. They may be taught after the child has learned to read, as a special lesson in spelling, or the child will read "eight" correctly the first time he sees it if it occurs in the sentence, "I can count one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten," or other sentences of a similar character.

CHAPTER VI

TEACHING HOW TO RECOGNIZE VISIBLE LANGUAGE

WHEN the pupils have been led to realize that the language they use orally may be represented in visible form as explained in Chapter II, the teacher has only two things to accomplish in training them to recognize language in its visible form:—

1. She must teach the process of combining sounds to form words.

2. She must teach the sounds and powers of the letters, and the sounds of vowels united as diphthongs, and such combinations of consonants as th, and ng.

All the lessons and exercises of the whole process of learning to recognize visible language, (what is usually spoken of as "learning to read,") should be given with the view of accomplishing one or both of these purposes:—to reveal new letter symbols and associate them with what they say, and to develop the power of automatic combination of sounds. It is of the utmost importance that teachers should understand this fact definitely, and remember it always, in the preparation of the work for their pupils both at the blackboard and at their seats, but especially at the blackboard. If the teacher understands this clearly and never forgets it while preparing her lessons, it will make her work definite, and purposeful, and effective.

The supreme aim in the work of learning to recognize visible language is to lead the child in the right processes of making the association of the proper sounds with their corresponding letter symbols certain, and to make sound combination automatic. Both processes are simple, so simple, that a bright child eight or nine years of age can readily learn to read in a week, and an average child of that age will do so in a month, if properly taught. The process of combining sounds into words may be taught in a single lesson, and it should be the first lesson given. Learning the sounds of the letters will be an incidental part of the work and takes very little time. Nearly the whole of the time that has to be spent in learning to recognize visible language has to be devoted to practices for the purpose of securing automatic and rapid power to associate correct sounds with the letters, and unite these sounds into words. The new things that the child has to learn are very few, and the new power is easily understood. The real work of learning to read consists in practice to make word recognition automatic, and the teacher's ability is shown by giving great variety to the practices, by adapting them to the child's nature in the form of games and problems, and by taking them in the proper logical order.

The First Step—Combination of Sounds

The combination of sounds, although it is the greatest step in learning to read, is really a very easy one for the children. It may be made a very interesting game for them. The teacher should begin somewhat as follows: "Point to the boy or girl whose name I say." She should then sound the words: S-a-m, N-e-d, K-a-te, T-o-m, N-e-ll, etc.

The letters should not be named, the sounds alone should be given. The words should be sounded slowly; the pauses made between the sounds of the letters being at first very short. If no one catches the name, it should be sounded again, and if necessary the pauses between the letter sounds should be made shorter, until the word is said very slowly with little, if any, pauses between the letters. "Sam" is a good word to begin with, because the sound of each letter may be continued for a time. This can be done with any vowel, but not with all the consonants.

When the light breaks in upon the children, and they find that they can tell the name with the sounds separated, the most difficult step in learning to read has been taken. Gradually the pauses between the letters should be lengthened and in a few minutes the children have made two important discoveries. They have found out that what seemed to be one sound in their language is really made up of different sounds united in proper order; and they have also learned that they can combine two or more sounds into one word. A third step may then be taken by allowing the children, in turn, to pronounce the names slowly and separate them into their elemental sounds. The teacher should suggest the names at first and choose easy words of not more than three letters. The same names that were used by the teacher in the first part of the exercise will be perfectly appropriate for the pupils, and each pupil may practice in turn on each word. The children should then in turn sound names chosen by themselves with pauses between the sounds. Words of four sounds may be used, when words of three sounds have been practised until the pupils can read-

ily combine the sounds to form the word or analyze the words into its component sounds. In a few minutes a new class of a dozen children will be intensely interested in this game, if it is conducted in a proper manner, and will be enjoying it thoroughly, while they are at the same time laying the foundations for the most essential powers in learning to read.

The game may be varied by saying: "Do what I tell you—s-i-t, r-u-n, h-u-m, s-i-n-g, s-t-a-n-d, sh-ou-t, etc.," or "Hold up what I tell you—b-oo-k, s-l-a-te, p-e-n, etc.;" or "Point where I tell you—u-p, d-ow-n, ou-t, etc." In the same way the teacher and pupils may sound the names of things in the room to see who can first find the thing named, and finally the teacher may sound with increasingly longer pauses any words commonly used by children and closely related to their experiences, and the pupils may also test their own power to give the sounds of any words they choose separately while their fellow pupils try to decide what the words are.

One lesson of this character will be sufficient for bright pupils, but it is better to give a few short reviews with similar games so that all may become fairly proficient in them. The pupils should be able to recognize words quickly, when their elements are sounded separately at intervals, before any letter forms are associated in their minds with these sounds.

The Second Step—Associating Letter Forms with Their Sounds

When the process of combining sounds has been made clear to the children there is only one more step in the recognition of visible language, which is to give them the letter symbols for the sounds they

have already been making and combining. When a child can combine the distinct sounds S-a-m into the word Sam, and separate the word Sam into its three elements in the order of their occurrence in the word quickly and definitely, he is ready to receive in one lesson the letter forms that represent these three elements in visible language.

After first explaining to the children that she is going to teach them to make the letters that represent the sounds they have been making she should ask them all together to make the different sounds in "Sam," and then to make the first sound and prolong it. She should give an illustration of what she wishes them to do. In fact most of her revelations in taking new steps should be made by illustration and not by verbal explanation. When they have prolonged the first sound, the letter "s" should be written on the blackboard several times slowly, and the pupils should watch carefully while the writing is being done. The teacher should tell them that she is making the picture of the little boy that says the sound they have been making. When they think they can make it they should be allowed to try to do so, first on the blackboard and then on their paper or slates. They should not be expected to make their letters very accurately at first. The teacher should be satisfied when they know how the letter is made. The power to make the letters accurately will require practice. The letters made by the teacher should be made correctly, and she should watch carefully to see that each child begins to make each letter at the proper place; but she should not expect perfection of form before she proceeds, and she should most carefully avoid making individual criticisms of the writing done by the pupils. She should make

the letter again on the blackboard, if there is any real error to be set right, or she may ask one of the children to make it on the blackboard. The other children will watch with more interest while one of their classmates is making it. It is practice that is necessary to enable the muscles of the arm and fingers to produce in visible form the letter forms in the child's mind, not more explanations. When a boy who is learning to skate falls he does not need a lecture on how to maintain his centre of gravity above the base of support, nor will it do him any good to tell him he must not lean forward, nor backward, nor to either side. He knows how he should go, and he needs practice in order to be able to do what he wishes to do. Many teachers destroy the interest of the children both in writing and reading by persistently criticising the form of the letters they make when they are learning to read. The teacher should note general errors if there be any in the writing for a future lesson in writing, but she should absolutely avoid reference to them during the reading lesson. She should be satisfied fully at first if the child writes so clearly that she can tell the difference between s and m, and if she can be sure what the child meant to write. The fact that his teacher reads his writing and appears pleased with it, will be the best inducement to lead a child to write more, and by much writing he will learn to write, if his teacher gives him the proper conception of the letter forms.

When "s" has been made and the children have learned that this little boy says the first sound of "Sam," the teacher should proceed with the second and third sounds as she did with the first, and in a few minutes,—surprisingly few, if they have had the

necessary practice orally in combining sounds to form words, and in separating words into their elementary sounds—they will be able to make the letters that say the three sounds in Sam. They knew the sounds before, now they know the two boys and the girl that make them. They have had a great revelation, but a greater one awaits them. "Write Sam," the teacher says, after they have been told that to write a word they have merely to separate the word into its sounds, speaking it very slowly, and write the boy or girl that says each sound as they make it. As soon as they are told to write "Sam" each pupil begins to say the first sound and holds it till he recognizes it. When they know what the first sound is they make the boy that says that sound. They sound the next part of the word in the same way and write the girl that says that sound, and so on with the last sound and its representative. They have gained a new power. They can make one word of their oral language visible. After this achievement, the teacher should say, "Write ma." Some of them will hesitate, most average children will begin to sound the word slowly and write the letters that say the sounds they make. Even if none of the pupils started to do so the teacher may set them all to work by saying "Sound the word 'Ma' slowly, and make the letters that say what you say." After "ma" the teacher should give the words "am" and "mam" which they may be led to write as they have written "Sam" and "ma." Thus they learn the last step in the great revelation, which is that they do not need a new set of letters for every word, but that the same letters may be used to write many words.

"S," "a," and "m," may be taught and used in

one lesson, after the proper preliminary training in vocal combination and vocal analysis. At the beginning of the next lesson, the teacher should give the pupils, as eye problems, the words they made in the first lesson as ear problems, by writing, "ma," "Sam," "mam," and "am" on the blackboard that the pupils may tell what the words are. In doing so they have to do nothing new. They have been trained and practised already in vocal combination. They have now merely to say each for himself what the letters say in turn and combine the sounds thus made in the order in which they are made, and they have the word they are trying to recognize. The teacher may at first have to guide the little ones in taking this step, but once it is taken, the pupil is able to recognize visible language made out of the letter elements with which he is acquainted. He does it slowly, and by conscious effort, but he can do it independently. He needs practice, but he has the golden key to literature, and practice will enable him to open all her doors.

When the pupils are able to use "s," "a," and "m" in both ear problems and eye problems, in writing the words that can be made with them when they are sounded, and in reading them when they are written, a new letter form should be taught. As a new tool should never be given to a child till he is conscious of the need of it, so a new letter form should not be given to a child till he has been made conscious of the need of it. "Write Sam!" "Write ma!" "Write am!" "Write mam!" These four problems have been given and solved, as a preparation for the next step. "Write sat," may be given as the next problem. Each child will start as usual to sound the first part and make the letter that says

that sound. In this way they get "sa—," but when they make the last sound in "sat" they can go no further. They make the sound correctly, but they have no visible symbol for it. They turn to the teacher, some laughingly, some hopelessly. Their faces reveal their dilemma. "Do you not know the boy that says that sound?" Would you like to meet the boy that says it?" Of course they would. "Here he is, then. Watch me make his picture"; and "t" is added to the little family who are going to help the children to read. He at once fills his place at the end of "sat." The teacher does not ask the class to sound "t" separately. She gives them another word to write at once, another ear problem requiring the use of "t." "Write mat!" And after "mat" is written, other ear problems follow. "At," "tat," "tam," "tata," may all be written now. Each word that is written reviews the use of other letters, and the complex process of sounding the parts separately as they occur, and writing the letters that say these sounds is becoming more simple. The analysis of the ear problem becomes easier, the association of letter symbols with sounds becomes more definite, and the forms of the letters become more familiar and more accurate.

"Write sap," leads to the introduction of another little friend who soon proves to be a very useful friend indeed. The child has five little friends, four boys and one girl, now. With these five friends he can make, am, at, pa, ma, Sam, sat, sap, mat, map, mam, pat, pap, tap, tat, tam, mamma, papa, tata, mast, past, taps, pats, tats, tams, mats, maps, stamp, stamps,—twenty-eight words in all.

No new letters should be taught until the children have acquired a ready facility in solving both ear

problems and eye problems with the five letters, s, a, m, t, and p.

When they can use these five letters rapidly and definitely they have learned all they can ever know of the processes of recognizing and writing visible language. The problems will be extended and made more difficult as they proceed by the introduction of more boys and girls, and their combinations, but the processes of solving the problems will remain the same. The pupils now have two new powers and they long to use them. New boys and girls may be introduced rapidly now. Bright pupils of eight or nine years of age will learn all the letter powers in a few days, and use them in making and recognizing words. When the race is wise enough to refrain from teaching reading to children till they are about nine years of age, there will be no more primers published. There will be much more interesting and attractive literature published for children, and as soon as they have acquired the powers of phonic analysis and phonic combination, and have become acquainted with the boys and girls that say these sounds of their language, and can use them, they will begin to read good stories. They will read at a moderate rate at first, and they will do so by conscious effort; but they will learn to read by reading after they have mastered the fundamental and very simple processes of recognizing and writing visible language. In a surprisingly short time they will be able to read without giving their primary attention to the recognition of words.

The children should never be asked to tell the name of a letter at any time, while they are learning to read. The names of things should never be taught by drill processes in any subject. No such mistake

is ever made outside of a school. Teachers who remember how the names of things are learned before children go to school should never make the blunder of trying to teach names by direct process or of asking children to repeat names as names. The child in the home has learned the name of every article he has used or seen used no matter how long or how hard the name may be, without ever having had a lesson on names of things, or being asked to name them. He learned the names incidentally by hearing them used in connection with the things. No mother ever says to her child, "This is a spoon, dear; now tell mamma its name." "This is a chair." "This is a cup," and so on through the long range of articles in the home. No intelligent man or woman ever did such teaching outside of a school. It is just as ridiculous in school as it would be in the home, whether we ask for the names of rocks, or trees, or flowers, or parts of plants, or of letters. The child heard the names of things used incidentally before he went to school. His parents said, "Pass me a knife," or "a plate," or "a spoon," or "a cup of tea." All the things used in the home were named as they were used, when names were necessary. They were never named for the sake of teaching their names, yet the child knew their names even before he could speak them. He learned the names "telephone," "refrigerator," and "gasolier," as easily as the names "dog," "lamp," and "boot." Names should be learned in school in the same way they are learned at home.

The teacher should use the names of letters just as the names of things are used in the home, or in everyday life anywhere. She should use the name of a letter when she needs to use it to refer to it

in any way. She should say, "S always says," or "What does 's' say?" or "Write 's'," but she should never point to a letter and say "What is the name of this letter?" or ask for the name of a letter in any other way. The pupils will learn the names of the letters much more quickly if they are not asked to learn them, and are not asked to give them, but are just allowed to learn them as they have been accustomed to learn other names, by using them and hearing them used.

Steps in Making Word Recognition Automatic

The aim of the teacher should be to enable the pupils to recognize words automatically, that is without conscious effort, so that they may be able to give their primary attention to the thought when they read. They cannot do this at once. Whether they are solving ear problems or eye problems, they should be allowed at first to sound the letters aloud in the order in which they occur. They require to do this to get clear perceptions of the sounds of the letters, as a basis for definite conceptions, and in order that they may learn to combine the sounds of the words properly in eye problems, and find out what sounds they have to represent visibly in ear problems. As in teaching all other subjects in which it is possible to begin by giving the pupils the early steps by perceptions, the perceptive stage should be passed as soon as possible. This is a universal law, and it therefore applies in reading as in other subjects. The child must begin by sounding aloud what the letters say, but he should continue to sound them aloud only until the letter is definitely associated with what it says.

There are four natural stages in the process of de-

velopment from the sounding or perceptive stage to the silent or automatically conceptive stage in either ear or eye problems. These stages are in both cases:

1. Sounding aloud what the letters say.
2. Whispering the sounds.
3. Consciously thinking the sounds.
4. Automatic association and recognition.

The third stage should be reached as quickly as possible. Some children reach it in a few days. The third stage passes into the fourth gradually as the result of practice.

Problems

A problem that reaches the child's mind through its ear may be called an ear problem, and one that is grasped through the eye may be called an eye problem. Word recognition has in the past been learned almost entirely through the eye, but ear problems are much more effective in aiding the child to associate the letters with what they say than eye problems. The child has more to do in solving an ear problem than an eye problem. He has to separate the word to be written into its elements by sounding it; he has to decide what letters "say the sounds" as he makes them; and he has to write the letters in their proper order. This makes the association of the letter with its sounds very definite. There is no other method of fixing facts, or principles, or associations in the memory that is so effective as using the hand to work out or represent them. When the mind of a child has to guide the hand, the intellectual effort must be definite, and the result on the memory is more positive and more lasting than if no productive or constructive effort is made. Ear prob-

lems are of great value, too, because children are made happy by the ability to write words themselves. The teacher may use the child's joyous pride in the acquisition of this power to sustain and develop his interest in reading, spelling, and writing so that these studies never become wearisome.

Ear problems should precede eye problems, not only in preparing the children for phonic combination and phonic analysis, but in the work of defining in the child's mind the association between each new letter and what it says. When each new letter is introduced it should be used first in solving ear problems. The need of the new letter can best be revealed by giving an ear problem that cannot be solved without it, that is a word that cannot be written with the letters already known. When the pupils find a sound for which they have no letter representative they are ready for the new boy or girl letter. In the early stages of learning to recognize visible language most of the teaching done in class at the blackboard should be done by ear problems.

Eye problems are simply problems in recognizing words or sentences that are new to the children, and translating them into oral language. In ear problems the pupils make visible language to correspond with the oral language used by the teacher. In eye problems the pupils use oral language to correspond with the visible language made or shown by the teacher. Eye problems should be given to the children both when they are out in class, and when they are at their seats, as soon as they are far enough advanced to be able to try to read silently from cards or books, containing suitable reading matter for them.

A great variety of problems may be given to the pupils for work at their seats even in the very early

stages of their progress in word making and word recognition. The following are illustrations of many problems that may be given for seat work:

Make as many words as you can with these letters—a, o, m, p, t, s, and be able to use each word in speaking to the class, if called upon to do so.

Make as many words as you can beginning with m, or p, or s, or any other letter.

Make as many words as you can beginning or ending with st, sh, or any other combination.

Fill in the blanks to make as many words as possible—m—p, s—p, p—t, r—sh, or te—, ne—, fa—, or —nd, —sh, —rt.

There is practically no limit to the variations that may be made of each problem for work, while the pupils are at their seats.

When pupils are fairly well advanced a good exercise for seat work is to start them with a word, say "corn," and ask them to make as many words as possible by changing one letter at a time in consecutive order, for instance, corn, born, barn, bars, cars, card, hard, hand, band, bend, lend, mend, send, sent, tent, tens, hens, etc. When they are far enough advanced this problem may be given still more definitely by saying "Change 'corn' to 'bend' with as few changes as possible."

In the early stages of the work of learning to read the problems may be given in the form of interesting games which will give the children opportunities for amusement while they are learning to make and recognize words. Each pupil may be made to personate a letter by having it written on a slate which he holds in front of his breast. If slates are not used the teacher may have a set of cards with the letters painted on them, to hang around the necks

of the children, or to be fastened in front of them. The following are among the many ways in which ingenious teachers may use this method of assigning problems in reading:—

1. Pupils stand in a row, teacher names those who are to step out, they face the class as they are called out, and the pupils name the word made by the letters on their slates.

2. Exactly the same as (1), only that pupils in turn do the work of the teacher.

3. Same as (1) or (2) with the understanding that all those called out stand with their backs to the class until the word is completed, and turn around for a few seconds in the order of the letters of the word. The pupils see the letters in order and only one at a time.

4. Exactly as in (3), only instead of turning one at a time the pupils forming the word turn at once and turn again in a few seconds, the teacher indicating the time, and shortening it as the pupils advance.

5. Same as (4), but the class turns instead of the pupils forming the word. They have their backs turned to the word until it is ready.

6. Same as (5), but the teacher writes the word on the board instead of forming it with pupils.

7. Pupils change the word by sending one more letter pupil to the front.

8. Pupils change the word by sending one pupil away.

9. Pupils change the word by rearranging the pupils already in the word.

10. Pupils change the word by sending one pupil to the class and substituting another in his place. (More than one may be changed).

11. Teacher names a word and calls on a pupil to bring out the right pupils to make the word.

12. Teacher names a word and pupils come themselves in the proper order to make the word.

13. Two or more pupils may be given the same letter. The teacher names a word—say "mat." As soon as the teacher says "one," every child with "m" on his slate steps out from the line and turns around. At "two" those with "a" and at "three" those with "t" step out and turn round.

14. Same as (13), except that the "m" children should select the children that represent the next letter, and they in turn should choose the children who are to follow them.

The most tactful teacher will have greatest variety in problems for her class.

These games may be played with a whole class and several pupils may represent the same letter. When the teacher or the pupil who is leading names a word the pupils stand up in turn as the teacher says—"one," "two," "three," etc. Pupils who fail to stand promptly when theirs is the next letter, or who stand when they should not do so, may be put out of the game. Sides may be chosen for matches, and the pupils may raise their hands or step a pace forward when they are required to represent the next letter.

Suggestions Regarding the Best Way to Introduce the Letters to the Children

1. As has been already explained the pupils should never be asked to give the names of the letters. The names should be used by both teacher and children, but there should be no drill on the names of the letters. See page 83.

2. The teacher should use the expression "M says—", "S says—" or "What does 'm' say?" "What does 's' say?" and so on with the other letters.

3. Each teacher should investigate for herself to decide what the letters really say, by sounding short words very slowly and noting carefully what part of the oral word is represented by each letter or combination of letters. The words chosen for this practice should have no silent letters.

4. It will be of great service to the teacher to make a classified list of the consonant sounds. The definition commonly given of a consonant is a very misleading and very absurd definition. "To say that a consonant is a letter that cannot be sounded without the aid of a vowel" is clearly incorrect. The letters p, t, and k make no sound and do not demand even an expulsion of breath except at the end of a word. But even if the statement made in the definition were correct it is manifestly a weak way to define anything by telling what it does *not* do. The proper way to define anything is to state its class and explain what it really does—what its function is—so that it may be distinguished from others of its class. The use of the consonants is to indicate organic formations in using oral language. Oral language is produced by changing the position of the vocal organs so as to modify the stream of breath as it passes from the lungs either as breath only, or as breath made into sound. The vowels represent the various sounds; the consonants indicate the ways in which the organs are placed to stop the stream of sound or breath either partially or entirely, or to direct it through the nose. A perfect alphabet would indicate the organic formation by the form

of the letters, and indicate also whether the stream from the lungs is breath only or voice, and whether the stream has to be stopped fully or partially, and, if only partially, whether the escape of breath or voice is through the mouth or the nose. Such an alphabet was invented by Professor Alexander Melville Bell and has been used with great success in training deaf mutes to use oral language.

The simplest scheme for making a classification of the consonants that will be of most service for teaching purposes is to divide them first into sound and breath consonants. Any teacher can do this; and it will be a most interesting lesson for the pupils of the higher grades to co-operate with the teacher in deciding to which class each consonant belongs. The decision may be arrived at unerringly by choosing short words and sounding them slowly and deciding in regard to each consonant in turn.

When all the consonants have been classified into sound modifiers or breath modifiers, they should be further subdivided into those which stop the stream of sound or of breath partially, and those which stop the stream of sound or of breath completely. As those which stop the stream only partially may be continued as long as a single exhalation continues they may be named "continuous" to distinguish them from those that we cannot continue to make because the passage of air from our lungs becomes completely stopped by the organic construction which they demand. The letters m, n, etc., may be sounded as long as we can continue to breathe out; such letters as b, d, etc., can be sounded only a short time as there is no way of escape for the sound during the organic formation which they represent. When the letters have been classified as recommended the

teacher should record them for her guidance in a table as follows:

Sound.		Breath.	
Continuous.	Stopped.	Continuous.	Stopped.
m	b	s	t

It will be exceedingly interesting to construct a table of pairs of consonants in which the organic construction of each pair is exactly the same, the difference between the letters in each pair being that in one case only breath is used and in the other case sound. In f and v, s and z, and similar pairs the organic construction is the same. The teacher may prove this to herself by first making the power of "f" and then without in any way changing the organic construction, making a sound with her vocal chords. If she does so she will find that she is making the sound of "v." The digraph "th" will give a fine illustration of the change made by retaining the same organic formation and changing from breath to sound if the teacher will first start to pronounce "think," and after dwelling on the "th" in this word, will without changing the organic formation say "though." The only change made in the "th" is the formation of a sound with her vocal chords while she retains the first organic formation.

The complete tables are omitted in both cases because the real knowledge of the subject will come to the teacher by constructing the tables instead of by committing to memory tables constructed by others.

This law should be followed by teachers in teaching other subjects in which tables have to be used, when they may be formed by the experimentation or investigation of the pupils. The writer has tested many classes of students in training classes by asking them to construct tables as directed, and in every case with excellent results. One of the most gratifying results of such tests is the fact that in every test the students had difficulty in deciding in regard to "h," and in every case some of them had sufficient faith in the result of their investigations to decide definitely that "h is not a consonant." Having made the distinction between "sound" and "breath" consonants clear, by experiments and the construction of tables, it is a very simple matter to lead a class of students to discover for themselves that "h" is a breath vowel as Professor Alexander Melville Bell decided long ago.

5. In beginning to teach the recognition of visible language it is better to use continuous consonants because the children can continue to make the sounds or powers of the letters long enough to get clear perceptions in regard to them. The importance of this is manifest. Clear perceptions form the basis of all real progress. Indefinite perceptions give indefinite conceptions, and trying to deal with indefinite conceptions in any subject must discourage and confuse the child, and may weaken his intellectual power for life.

6. One of the commonest mistakes made in teaching by the phonic method is to make a sound or allow the breath to escape before the organic formation for a letter is complete. Several books published in England by distinguished educators condemn the phonic method because they say "it is but

a clumsy alphabetic method in which the letters are called um, pu, tu, etc., instead of em, pee, tee, etc." In three works on teaching, this objection is given and in each case the same letters are used as illustrations. This leads to the conclusion that one man wrote the objection and the others copied it. Three thinkers may separately discover the same truth, but it is highly improbable that three men ever separately reached the same conclusion, when it was an error, and used exactly the same illustrations as a basis for their wrong conclusions. Unfortunately for the phonic method many teachers at first tried to sound the letters and drill on them separately. This must lead to incorrect speaking and improper articulation. *The consonants make no sound whatever either before the organic formations they represent are made, or after these formations are changed.* The breath consonants make no sound even while the organic formations last. It is an error to say um or mu for "m", it is a gross error to say ut or tu for "t" because "t" makes no sound. "Sound" consonants do modify sounds, and the sound of "m" for example should escape through the nose while the organic formation it represents is continued, but neither before nor after the organic formation. In the stopped sound consonants, such as "b" and "d", the sound cannot escape but is formed in the larynx. The teacher must from the first carefully train the children so that they will make no sound and allow no breath to escape when sounding or making a letter, either before the organic formation is made, or after it has been changed. Each letter should act only while its organic construction continues, and it should have no effect whatever at any other time, except when it

is the final letter, in which case there is a slight expulsion of breath in some cases. To make any sound before the organic construction for a letter begins, or after it ceases, makes it very difficult to teach the process of phonic combination so as to unite letter sounds to form words. The children are not likely to form any bad habits of giving extra sounds or too much breath in connection with the consonants, unless the teacher drills on the sounds as individual sounds.

The children should be taught to make the consonants say just what they say in combination with other letters to make the words of which they form a part. The failure to do this has been one of the chief causes of difficulty and lack of success in using the phonic method. Teachers must be always on the alert to prevent the habit of using either sound or breath before the organic formation of the letter is made or after it ceases. Some teachers have difficulty in cultivating their own habit of definite ear attention so thoroughly as to notice and correct errors in this department of their work.

In speaking, the organic contact necessary to form the consonants is instantaneous. Oral speech is a very remarkable illustration of the perfection of the human organism, if we consider the number of changes made in the positions of the vocal organs in an hour. The number of changes necessary to utter a single sentence, and the ease and accuracy with which they are made are especially worthy of note. One of the clearly defined purposes of the teacher should be to train the children to *make the organic consonant formations continue for the shortest possible time.* This will be of great assistance in acquiring the power of phonic combination. The sound or

breath power of a consonant should be made long enough for the children to get a clear perception of it, when it is first introduced to them; but in using it from the first the aim should be to make it for the shortest possible time in which the formation can be definitely made. There should, of course, be no hurry in speaking, and no part of a word that says anything should be omitted or partially sounded or made. Every part should be uttered, and every formation should be made definitely, especially the last consonant sound in the word, but to prolong the consonantal effects destroys the perfection of oral speech. The failure to form the organic constructions represented by consonants definitely and accurately causes defects in enunciation; to continue the organic constructions too long causes improper pronunciation.

To dwell too long on the organic construction of consonants may cause the habit of stammering. Nearly all stammering is caused by continuing the formation of the stopped consonants too long. Stammering caused by the continuous consonants is usually much more easily cured than stammering caused by the stopped consonants, because the sound or breath escapes during the organic lock of stammering in the case of the continuous consonants, while in the case of stopped consonants the stream of sound or breath accumulates and helps to continue the organic lock. The first thing to do in curing stammering is to train the stammerer to make his organic formation automatically instantaneous, and to stop the habit of trying to break by extra pressure the organic locks that cause stammering. The stammering lock is caused either by imperfect breathing power, a weak nervous system, or lack of

definiteness in the brain action necessary in thinking. Very few children, and indeed very few adults can either inhale or exhale properly when breathing. All children may be trained, and should be trained, to breathe deeply and to inhale and exhale smoothly without spasmodic action of the diaphragm. This may be done easily and successfully, and a healthy child who has been trained to say "ah" for forty seconds with a single breath effort may be cured of stammering in a very short time. All he requires is specific practice to make his organic formation automatically rapid in making a few of the consonants. The child whose thinking is not done definitely stammers because his brain does not send messages with sufficient clearness to the vocal organs. He must be trained to think definitely. The child whose nervous system is not in good order stammers because the communication between the organs of speech and the brain and neurologic centres is not properly carried on. The imperfection is sometimes the result of an accident in early childhood, and is often caused by a poor condition of general health with poor nerve nutrition. Chlidren who stammer from this cause need exercise in the open air and an improved diet. They may require medical treatment. They should certainly be examined by a wise physician. But whatever the remote, or organic cause of stammering may be, the immediate cause is a lock in the organic construction corresponding to some of the consonants, the worst of them being usually the stopped consonants. The teacher should, therefore, teach the children to make the organic formation corresponding to the consonants quickly as well as definitely.

7. For reasons already explained, the teacher

should, so far as possible, associate a real personality with each letter. She should speak of a new consonant as "a new little boy," and of a new vowel as "a new little girl." The letters as they are learned may be placed in a house or in a garden which may be represented by a rectangle drawn in an upper corner of the blackboard, so that they may live in the house or play in the garden. When a new letter is to be introduced, a friend of his, one of the letters already known, may be brought out to meet him, and the class may salute the new letter by saying what the old letter says, and the teacher may respond by saying what the new letter says, after which they are both brought into the garden or house, and the new letter is introduced to the others, the teacher personating the old letters as they are introduced, and the pupils personating the new letter. The children will learn the powers of the letters more definitely and more rapidly by means of some such game as this, than by any other process, especially by any process of drill.

8. As soon as a letter has been introduced to the old letters it should be used. The teacher should first give ear problems and then eye problems involving the use of the new letter, and then the pupils themselves should in turn be allowed to think of short words that require the new letter to speak in order to form them, and the rest of the class should write these words. With any means such as has been described of arousing and retaining a vital interest on the part of the pupils the work of learning what a letter says is very easy and takes only a very short time. A more realistic association may be given in the case of some of the letters by associating their

sounds with what certain other things say, when the children themselves can suggest the similarity.

In teaching the forms of the letters the same general principle should be applied as far as possible. The letters should be spoken of as individuals, and their parts associated with some common things. For instance "m" may be a boy with three legs, or it may be made with three canes; "n" a boy with two legs or made with two canes; the crossing of "t" may be its necktie; and so on.

9. When the family of letters becomes too large for one house they may be placed in different houses. Letters that exactly correspond in organic formation as "t" and "d" may be placed in one house; the letters that are formed with the lips or lips and teeth may be placed in another house, those made by the tongue and teeth in another, those made at the back of the mouth in another, and those that send the stream of sound or breath through the nose in another.

Some teachers keep each letter in a separate house so that the children may play games in forming words. The teacher and the children in turn give words to be made, and the pupils in turn take the pointer and rap on the doors of the letters in the proper order to make the words. The teacher, or a selected pupil, writes the letters on the blackboard in succession as they are called upon to form the word. The game may be varied by allowing each child to write the letter at whose house he rapped.

Some teachers cut out cardboard brownies to represent the letters, and make the letters on the bodies of the brownies. The brownies with whom the children are acquainted stand in a row above the blackboard, or in some other place, where they may be

easily seen. The introduction of a new brownie may be made a pleasing and interesting ceremony. The vowels should, of course, be girl brownies.

10. Whether the letters are brownies, or ordinary boys and girls, or just letters living in little houses in a row at the top of the blackboard, the vowels should be made in colored chalk to make the distinction more definite.

These suggestions are made as illustrations of the plans that may be adopted with great advantage.

Methods of Taking Answers in Class

The teacher should carefully avoid taking answers in such a way as to allow one pupil to lead or guide another, or to make it possible for the slower pupils to follow the lead of those that are brighter. In harmony with the fundamental law of self-activity each pupil should think and answer independently. It will not do to let the names of words be spoken aloud as soon as they are discovered, or the slower pupils will get little development and they will be trained to rely on others and to give as their own, answers worked out by others. It is astonishing how instantaneously pupils in a class will catch the answer given by a leader in simultaneous answering.

When giving ear problems, slates are better than paper for use by the children, but pads may be used. The teacher simply says write "smart" or "tramp," or some word that contains only known letters, and each child proceeds to write. When done each child holds up his slate or pad, and the teacher says "right," or "wrong," or marks with chalk or pencil. The word should then be sounded slowly with a pause after each sound to enable those who were not right to suggest the proper letters to repre-

sent the sounds as they are made to form the word. The marks are not given to classify the pupils, but to the child they mean success and the teacher's recognition of it. These are two important elements in keeping alive the "prospering ambition" of children.

In solving eye problems, the pupils should raise their hands when they think they have solved the problems given, and as the hands are raised the teacher should step in front of each pupil, place an open hand on each side of the child's mouth to prevent others hearing, and lean forward to allow the child to whisper the word or sentence that has been written on the board. A smile or the shaking of the head will indicate the result to the child.

If wrong the child at once tries again to find where he has gone wrong in either ear or eye problems. These exercises guided by a good teacher will develop as much concentration of effort and enthusiasm as any exercises that can be given in school, not excepting even the plays of the school-grounds.

It is of the highest importance in teaching all subjects that the slower or backward children should receive more direct attention than those who are quicker or more advanced. It is of great importance, too, that the bright pupils shall not be held back while the others are receiving special attention. No child should be trained to work at a low rate of speed, when he is capable of working at a high rate. It is therefore a good plan, when about two-thirds of the time of the reading lesson has passed, to give either ear or eye problems rapidly and allow the first pupils who give correct answers to go to their seats, and proceed with other work which has been assigned for them. If the class be large, two or

three pupils may be sent to their seats by the solving of each problem. In this way the teacher will soon have the pupils left who need most guidance and most practice, and she will be able to discover the special difficulties that have prevented the more backward pupils from making more rapid progress. By grading the problems to the standard of ability of the slower pupils, by giving them a great deal of practice, and by sympathetic encouragement, those who may have difficulty in understanding the processes of word recognition may be aided in taking the early steps and thus become independent readers.

When the pupils have fairly mastered the processes of word recognition, it is a good plan to make the tests given at the close of the lesson contribute as much as possible to rapidity of recognition.

The pupils may be asked to stand with their backs to the class till the word or sentence is written on the board and to turn at a signal from the teacher.

The pupils may be asked to go to sleep—to shut their eyes—while the teacher writes the word or sentence, and wake up at a signal.

A number of words or sentences may be written on the board and covered with a curtain so that as the curtain is raised one word or one sentence may be exposed at a time.

An exceedingly good plan is to write the letters one at a time in the order in which they occur in the word, while the pupils are watching, and after allowing each letter to remain on the board for a short time to erase it before writing the next letter. This develops a high degree of alertness of attention and quickness of mental action.

The teacher may develop the same alertness and quickness by taking a pointer and pointing to the letters in their houses, or to the brownies in the order in which they come in the words. This would have to be done slowly at first, and only short words should be used till the pupils have had considerable practice.

The pupils will be delighted to have the opportunity of taking the pointer and rapping on the doors of the letter houses to form words which they wish to give as rapid eye problems to the rest of the class.

It is an excellent plan when taking the class to let the first two or three who answer correctly come out of the class to assist the teacher in examining the written work of the other pupils in ear problems, and in hearing the whispered answers of the other members of the class when eye problems are given. This is a capital exercise for those who are called out; it saves time; and it is a stimulus for all to work hard in order to secure the honor of assisting the teacher.

Teaching the Vowels

The short sounds of the vowels should be the only sounds taught while the pupils are taking the early steps in reading. All the processes of recognizing visible language may be taught and should be taught with but one sound or power for each letter. It is best to begin with only one vowel and to teach no other until several consonants have been taught. The best order to teach the vowels is a, o, e, i, u. This order is suggested because the short sounds of "a" and "o" may be prolonged more easily and more definitely than the short sounds of the other letters.

In the case of "a" the sound given should not strictly speaking be the short sound but the sound of "a" in "ah." The only sounds of the vowels that it will be necessary to teach till the children can read freely are the short sounds and the long sounds. The children will recognize all the words of the language, if they are taught only the short and the long sounds of the vowels. It is entirely erroneous to assume that children should be learning how to pronounce words when they are learning how to recognize visible language. When the pupils are older they should receive careful training in all the sounds of the vowels and the diacritical marking of the dictionary accepted as authority in the school which they attend, and absolutely correct use of vowels should be insisted upon. Even from the first day the pupils should have practice in correct pronunciation of words commonly mispronounced. No day of school life should ever pass without some practice to improve the speech of the pupils by securing greater accuracy of enunciation, and more perfect clearness and pureness of vowel tone. The teacher should not make a point of correcting each child's errors as they are made. This course humiliates and discourages sensitive children. The mistakes should be noted, and lists of words including the vowels that are commonly used incorrectly should be practised by all the pupils during the time set apart for this purpose. The teacher's own pronunciation should be as perfect as possible, and the pupils will learn to use vowels correctly by hearing them used correctly.

But the process of learning to recognize visible language, by whatever method the pupils are taught, is not, and cannot, logically be made a process for

teaching pupils to pronounce correctly. Pupils may, of course, reveal their imperfections of speech during a reading lesson, as they may during a lesson in arithmetic or any other subject, but it is just as unwise to correct these imperfections during a lesson in the recognition of visible language, as to do so when the pupils are learning to add. The mistakes made in the use of language should be corrected during the time set apart for language, and the errors in pronunciation should be corrected during the period set apart for pronunciation.

"Every lesson should be a language lesson." Yes! Every lesson should afford opportunities for the pupils to use language orally or in writing or in both ways, but to make every lesson a time for correcting mistakes in the use of language interferes with the progress of the pupils, not only in the subjects being taught but in pronunciation and in the correct use of language. If when a child has read a paragraph or stanza, he is told that he has given an incorrect sound for "a" in "fast," and "father," and "aunt," and that he has used the anterior "c" in "calm," instead of the posterior "c," and sounded only one "r" in "barrel," which forced him to use the wrong sound of "a" in both "calm" and "barrel," and if he is asked to read his paragraph or stanza again and make the corrections after the correct sounds have been given to him, he is not taught wisely either in reading or in pronunciation. When he "reads it again" he is not thinking of the strength or beauty of the thought he has to express and how to express it so as to make the clearest and deepest impression. He is trying to remember the shades of the sounds of "a" and the correct way to pronounce "calm" and "barrel." His power of

thought expression is weakened, and his pronunciation, if improved at all, is improved in the least effective way by such teaching.

When the child is learning to recognize visible language it is unnecessary and unwise to make him conscious of the fact that the vowels have so many sounds and shades of sounds. The English boy, the German boy, and the American boy give different sounds to the vowels and in many cases different powers to some of the consonants. The process of learning to recognize visible language should not be a process of training these three boys to give exactly the same sounds to vowels, and the same powers to the consonants. Learning to read is a process of learning to recognize in visible form the language already used orally.

In a new class of ten pupils beginning to learn to read it is quite probable that no two of them give exactly the same sound to "a" in "fast." It would not help them in the slightest degree to recognize the visible word "fast" if they could all pronounce the word correctly. It would be a total waste of time for the teacher to try to make them all pronounce "fast" in the same way, so far as the recognition of the visible word "fast" is concerned. The sound of "ah" that has been given to them will suggest to each child the sound of "a" that he has been accustomed to use in his oral language in pronouncing "fast."

In the process of learning to recognize visible language two vowel sounds, the short sound and the long sound, are all that are necessary to enable the children to recognize all the words in their language, and this is what the first stage of learning to read really means. Nearly all the primers that

have been prepared have given a page to each vowel sound, a page to each diphthong, and a page to each peculiar combination of letters such as th, ng, tion, sion, etc. It may be wise to devote a lesson to each peculiarity, but it is quite unnecessary to do so in the case of the vowels and the diphthongs.

When the pupils have used the short vowel sounds till they are able to recognize freely, and write quickly, words in which short or kindred sounds are the only vowel sounds used, they are ready for a lesson on the long sounds. A single, short lesson is sufficient to teach the long sounds of all the vowels. All that is to be learned is contained in the single statement which the teacher should make: "These little girls sometimes say their own names." A few illustrations should be given, and then the pupils should be told that when the girls have a "hat" on, or a "shade" over them they "say their own names." The dash over the letter may be to the children a "hat" or a "shade." It takes no longer to teach that all the vowels "say their own names" sometimes than to teach that any one of them does so. Indeed it is easier to teach that all the girls say their own names when a "hat" or "shade" is put over them than to teach that one of them does so. A general principle is more readily accepted than a special rule.

The dash to indicate the long sound is easily made by the teacher in eye problems. Even the dash requires to be used for only a short time in practice. The thought association enables the pupils to decide whether the vowels say their own names or not. If the teacher writes the sentence: "Sam's hat is on the table," the children will need no mark over "a" in "table" to enable them to pronounce it correctly

after they have learned that the girls do not always say the same thing. Indeed the most logical way to lead the children to see that the vowels do not always say the same thing is to give them short sentences to read in which the vowels say more than one sound.

Some teachers prefer to write the vowels with colored crayons when they say their own names. This makes a good variety in eye problems, and eye problems are the only problems in which it is absolutely necessary to use any method of distinguishing the long sound from the other sounds. When the children are writing the words it is not necessary to indicate which sound the vowels have. The teacher has indicated that by pronouncing the words. It is only in eye problems that the marking of even the long sound needs to be done, and even this should not be continued long.

When the sounds of "o" in such words as "move" or "love" are met with it is only necessary to tell the pupils that "o" sometimes says "oo," and at other times speaks like "u." It is even better to let the children find out these facts for themselves by writing simple sentences such as "Tom loves his mamma." The pupils will speedily find that the long sound of "o" does not make the right word, and they know what the word should be, because the "l" and "v" give the key to it. When the pupils have clearly realized the fact that the letters do not always say the same thing, and have had considerable experience in using vowels with more than one sound, a general statement that "a" sometimes speaks for "e," "i" some times speaks for "e," "e" sometimes speaks for "a," or "o," and "o" sometimes speaks for "u," will be sufficient to account for the few words such as "said," "ma-

chine," "eight," "sew," and "love." The few unusual irregularities of the language need not be considered as difficulties. The children should be good readers before they meet with them at all, and when they can read they will have to be pretty stupid to pronounce "sew" with "ew" as in "new," or "machine" with the sound of long "i" in such a sentence as "Jane sews her dresses with a sewing machine," or if they fail to pronounce "eight," and "again" correctly, when they are asked to read:

"One, two, three, four, five,
I caught a hare alive;
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
I let him go again."

The fact is, as shown by experience, that the pupils will read such sentences as these without being conscious that "e," or "i," or "a," are saying anything unusual, if they are able to read freely before such irregularities are given them to read. There are so few of these irregularities that the pupils may be able to read nearly all of the words in our language before they are introduced to words in which the vowels speak for other vowels, or say anything very peculiar.

The Diphthongs

The diphthongs do not require a separate lesson for each diphthong. Nearly all the necessary teaching about diphthongs may be done in one or at most two lessons. One lesson may be devoted to the coming together of two girls when only one of them speaks. In improper diphthongs it will be found that the first girl is usually the one that speaks. The teacher may take a list of words such as sail, pail, fail, rain, pain, gain, maid, paid, or hear, near,

meat, seat, neat, bean, lean, read, lead, oar, soar, coat, goat, coal, goal, moan, loan, hoe, etc., and by a series of experiments lead the pupils to make two discoveries: first, that in each case the first girl says her own name, and second, that the second girl says nothing. They may thus be led to make a general law, which will have exceptions, that when two girls come together, if the second is silent the first usually says her own name. They should in due time be shown that this is not always true by such examples as head, meant, said, their, etc., but it will help them to overcome more than half their difficulties with diphthongs to learn that when two girls come together in the same syllable the second girl usually says nothing and the first says her own name. They may be shown in the same lesson that if the two girls are in the same syllable or the same small word the same rule is nearly always followed, by taking a list of words such as: hat—hate, kit—kite, pet—Pete, not—note, cut—cute, etc. In every such case the second girl will say nothing, and the first will say her own name. The pupils may be led to discover this in a few cases in which the teacher gives hate, kite, Pete, note, cute, etc., as combined eye and ear problems. For a time in using improper diphthongs or short words ending with "e" silent it is wise to draw the crayon through the silent letters, when eye problems are given to the pupils. Silent consonants may be marked in the same way. It is not really necessary for the pupils to draw a line through the silent vowels when solving ear problems. A good kind of problems to fix this lesson in the minds of the pupils is to ask them to make words in two ways as pail and pale, sail and sale, pain and pane, lain and lane.

The second lesson about diphthongs should show that when two girls come together they sometimes sing a duet. When they do this they make a real diphthong or a proper diphthong, each making a sound and uniting these sounds into one sound. By taking out, pout, our, sour, flour, count, oil, soil, toil, etc., the teacher will be able to show the children in one short lesson that the girls in "ou" and "oi," when they come together sing a duet. By sounding "o" and "u" in quick succession the sound of "ou" will be produced, and by sounding "o" and "i" in quick succession the sound of "oi" will be produced. When "w" and "y" come after "o" they sing duets with "o" just as "u" and "i" do.

Nearly all the proper diphthongs are formed by uniting the sound of "o" with that of another vowel, either "i" or "u", or "y" and "w" taking the place of "i" and "u", so that children will very easily learn to distinguish the duets from the solos when two girls come together. The diphthongs "ou" and "ow" occasionally sing solos and not duets, as in slow, grow, snow, ought, etc.

The diphthong "eu" or "ew" in such words as "feud," or "new," may be taught as a duet by the union of long "e" and "oo," but as long "u" is a diphthong itself made by the union of long "e" and "oo" the diphthong "eu" or "ew" may be regarded as a solo in which the second girl speaks instead of the first.

The diphthong "ie" is peculiar. Both letters do not speak at the same time, but sometimes "i" speaks and sometimes "e". In words of one syllable ending with "e", such as pie, tie, etc., the "i" follows the general rule and does the speaking;

in most words, however, such as brief, grief, thief, believe, etc., the "e" speaks and not the "i". In "uy" the second girl does the speaking. In "ey" the first girl speaks but it says long "a".

Two vowels may stand together without forming either a proper or an improper diphthong. When they come in separate syllables they cannot be united into one sound or influence each other so as to produce one sound. The pupils will make this discovery for themselves in the course of their reading. It is unwise to confuse the children with details of this character.

The two great facts which require to be taught to the children in connection with diphthongs are: first, that when two girls come together it is usually the first only that speaks; and second, in most cases, the first one says her own name. The proper diphthongs are so few and their combined sound so clearly what the two letters say in rapid succession that they give very little trouble.

Although all the general principles connected with the diphthongs could be explained in a single lesson, it is better to teach the improper diphthongs first and practice them for a time till the children can use them readily both in ear problems and in eye problems, before teaching the proper diphthongs.

It may be of service to the teacher to remember that long "i" as well as long "u" is a diphthong. Long "i" is composed of "ah" and "ee" said very quickly, and long "u" is made by "ee"—"oo" Some would spell long "u" by using "y"—"oo' instead of "ee"—"oo." There is very little difference in the organic formation of long "e" and the consonant "y".

Capital Letters

There need be little difficulty in teaching the capital letters. They may be spoken of as grown up, or in any other familiar way. When a child has an idea clearly it does not confuse him to give him two forms to represent the idea. A young child will learn to speak two languages, if father speaks to it in one language and mother in another. A child who has learned music by the Tonic Sol Fa notation will learn the staff notation in a single lesson if it knows music. Over and over again, large classes, not one pupil of which has ever had a lesson in the staff notation, have been taught a single lesson of half an hour's duration in public, and have immediately sung correctly two part music at sight that was written in the staff notation specially to test them and brought direct from the printing press to the hall. So it will not confuse the children at all to give them both forms of the letters, the capitals and the small letters. Neither is it at all confusing to give the children both the script form and the printed form. For a short time after the pupils begin to study visible language, that is until they have learned the process of recognition, they need not use capitals.

"A" and "The"

These words give most teachers a good deal of trouble in the primary classes. The reading of younger children is usually spoiled by dwelling too long on "a" and "the," and thus making them prominent. Many teachers give their pupils the short sounds of the vowels in these words, hoping to improve the reading. This teaching does not ac-

complish the desired result, and is inaccurate. The vowels have not the short sounds in these words, and it produces very incorrect speaking to try to give the short sounds. The trouble results from reading "a" and "the" as separate words. If they are spoken separately they should be pronounced correctly by giving "a" and "e" their long sounds. The vowels are obscure, and the words should be read subordinately. The child should be trained to read "a" and "the" as if they were syllables in the words that follow them. They should not speak them until they know the words that follow them, and should read them as unaccented syllables of these words.

The over emphasis and prolongation of these words is one of the bad results of reading aloud too early. This forces the child to give too much emphasis to the smaller and less important words. The children use "a" and "the" correctly in their oral language before they go to school. They have to be trained to give a drawling emphasis to them by wrong methods of teaching.

In training children to use "a" and "the" properly when reading, it is a good plan to write on the blackboard the sentence, "It is a brush" and "It is the brush," omitting the word "brush," and holding a real brush in the position of the word "brush." The pupils should then read the sentences in answer to the teacher's question, "What is this?" When they have read the sentences correctly with the real brush instead of the word, other things may be substituted for the brush, and the correct reading learned in a similar way. The pupils should look at the sentences, when they are answering the teacher's questions. When a number of articles have been

used, and the pupils are able to read the sentences as they have been in the habit of speaking them, the brush should be again used and then the word brush should be written in its place and the reading done by a few of the pupils individually. If any one prolongs or over emphasizes the "a" or "the," ask him to read it again while the brush is held over the word "brush." The names of the other words should be written in in turn and the practice continued until the sentences are read correctly by every pupil.

It is a good plan to have such a sentence as the following on the blackboard for occasional practice:— "A bird sat on a branch of a tree in a garden near a house on a fine day, and sang a sweet song for its mate in a nest." Practice in reading such a sentence will help to prevent the formation of incorrect habits of reading words separately and therefore over emphasizing the short words, and will remedy the defects of those who have formed incorrect habits through wrong methods of teaching. The children may be taught to read by phrases by using such a sentence, and asking questions that may be answered simultaneously by the whole class: "What sat?" "A bird." "Where did it sit?" "On a branch." "On a branch of what?" "Of a tree." "Where was the tree?" "In a garden." And so on. The pupils read only the words in the sentence, and they are trained to read in phrases and incidentally to see that the words in a short phrase should be read as nearly as possible like one word. The words in the phrase "in a tree," are as closely related as the syllables in the word "incomplete," and they should be as closely related in oral speech or in reading.

The method of emphasis in the phrases should correspond with the method of accenting the syllables in a word. We naturally pronounce our words with proper accent—not by giving additional force to the accented syllables but by obscuring or giving less force to the unaccented syllables. The prominence of the accented syllables is given by good speakers by shading down the unaccented syllables, and the necessary prominence of the word representing the dominant idea in a phrase, should be secured in the same way. Too often children are trained to secure emphasis by making a special effort on the emphatic word and raising it above the normal tone of good speaking. The proper method of securing emphasis—the natural method—is to give less force and time to the unemphatic words, instead of more force to the emphatic words. Emphasis is a matter of relative force, and the best way to secure it regulerly, in ordinary conversation, or in oratory, is to train children to read as cultured men and women speak, by relatively obscuring the unimportant words. They should have a great deal of practice in reading sentences composed of short phrases, and they should be trained not to speak the subordinate words of a phrase until they know the leading word to which the subordinate words are directly related.

CHAPTER VII

EXPRESSION

THE true basis of expression is self-expression. More than this the logical reason for teaching expression or developing expressive power is that it may be used in self-expression. Expressive power in reading should be developed by training the children to be regularly more expressive in all their oral language.

The fundamental element in oral expression in speaking or reading is the power of personation. This power should be developed until it becomes automatic, and the reader unconsciously assumes the character he is to represent, or the mental or emotional condition revealed in the selection he has read. Children love personation. They enjoy games in which they have to personate different characters. They personate animals, at first, better than they do the varied types of human character. The story of "Father Bear, Mother Bear, and Baby Bear," in which each of these leading characters uses exactly the same language, is an excellent story for practice. The whole class may be divided into three groups, one group to represent the father, one the mother, and one the baby. The teacher may relate with as much dramatic effect as possible the story leading up to the surprise of the bears on their return, and then each group should represent, as well as it can,

the tones of father, mother, and baby, as they express their feelings. Then the individuals in each group may take their part in turn. The groups should take a different part each day. Other stories in which animals are represented as holding conversations should be used regularly in primary classes, to give the children practice in personation. They soon commit short animal dialogues to memory, and they never tire of trying to personate the animals effectively.

When they have practised the personation of animals for some time, children enjoy, very heartily, the privilege of imitating street criers. "Fresh fish, all alive;" "Bananas ripe ten cents a dozen;" "Any rags to-day;" etc.; or the commands given to soldiers, such as "Eyes right, dress!" "Eyes front —Quick march!" etc.; or farm calls such as "Co boss! Co boss! Co! Co! Co!" or such calls as a fire alarm, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" Probably no other lesson can arouse as much spirited enthusiasm as a lesson of this kind in personation and imitation. The children themselves should suggest the various calls and alarms, and volunteers should be called for in each case to be tested in their ability to personate and imitate. The pupils should be allowed to applaud every one who does specially well. It will not be long before such an exercise relieves the children of their weakening self-consciousness so fully that the shyest and most restricted children will stand to take part. When they have once conquered their timidity, and have lost their restraining consciousness of self, they are on the highway to free expression. Such exercises often make remarkable character transformations in a few days. They are of great service, too, in developing the imagina-

tions of the children in addition to their value in the cultivation of freedom in expression.

Frequently the teacher should write on the blackboard such sentences as: "Oh, mother! I am so glad to see you!" and tell a story of a child who was away a long time from home, and who, when she came back and met her mother, rushed into her arms and said—. The teacher should stop at "said," and call upon the pupils individually to finish the story by reading the words on the blackboard. By the use of similar short stories all the emotions may be called forth, and their expression developed in a natural way as self-expression instead of formally. The emotion expressed should be real to each child, and not assumed. If the story be short and told dramatically there should be no doubt about the reality of the emotion, and reality in such cases is vital. Dramatic expressions such as: "Oh! mother, come back to me;" "Don't dare to touch my sister!" "He has stolen my top;" I never was so happy in my life;" "You know I love you, mother;" "I am sorry I did it, father;" "Here Prince, jump, old fellow;" and scores of others that will suggest themselves to every teacher may be written on the blackboard to be read by the pupils, when the climax of the story is reached by the teacher.

Many of the nursery rhymes and nursery tales make excellent matter for expressive recitation by little ones.

Such short poems as Riley's "The Goblins will git you if you don't watch out," and "Seeing things at night," afford fine opportunities for the development of variety of expressive power.

Short stories, either funny or dramatic, should be told to the children, and then told by individuals

of the class. The same stories may be told over and over again without losing their interest, each child trying to improve the telling. All will be willing to take their turn, if the teacher becomes a leader in applauding instead of criticising. No criticism should ever be made, under any circumstances, of the method of telling the story, or of imitating or personating.

Criticism of personal effort always weakens interest, and if interest is lost the vital element in true progress is lost.

The children should be trained to choose the best stories, and to tell stories they have heard at home. In certain cases it may be wise for the teacher to hear the stories before they are told to the class.

Very useful tablets for primary classes may be made by pasting colored pictures of bears, roosters, cats, dogs, soldiers, firemen, and other animals and men on large cards. A most interesting game may be played by calling one child to the front and allowing him to take the pointer and name certain pupils who are to stand up and imitate what the animals or men say as he points to them on the chart. He should point to one of the pictures, say the rooster, and call upon several boys and girls to crow like a rooster. There is a great deal of fun and quite as much profit in the development of expressive power in such an exercise. Pictures from Christmas picture books may be used in making the charts.

It is an excellent plan to write a series of questions on the blackboard and keep them covered with a curtain until the time for expressive practice. "What is your favorite game?" "On what street do you live?" "How old are you?" "What flow-

ers do you like best?" "What tree do you like best?" "How many sisters have you?" "How many brothers have you?" These and many other questions may be written and remembered. When the curtain is drawn the teacher simply says: "Number 7, John," "Number 3, Mary," and so on. The pupils do not read aloud a word of the questions. The pupil named stands after he has silently read the question whose number was given, and answers the question in a complete sentence. This is an important preliminary step introductory to reading aloud. As the pupil is not required to name the words he looks at, he is not compelled to cultivate the habit of saying words without thinking of their meaning, or very little about it, and thus to form the habit of reading without expression. The teacher's plans should not only prevent the cultivation of habits of expressionless reading, but they should give the most thorough training possible in rapid silent reading. The plan of answering aloud the questions that are written, combines a training in silent reading with good oral self-expression. The two essential elements in a good oral reader are the power of rapid silent reading and the power of self-expression, and any plan that secures both of these elements in a single exercise should be used as largely as possible.

Instead of a series of questions the teacher may sometimes write a series of instructions such as "Recite your favorite poem;" "Tell the best short story you have heard;" "Tell us the most remarkable experience you have had this week;" or "Sing a verse of your favorite song."

The pupils may be asked to write questions or give directions for oral work, and at a signal these

may be exchanged and answered or obeyed. This may arouse intense interest.

It is a good exercise to choose the most expressive exclamatory sentences or phrases in the reading lessons or in stories that are related by the teacher or by pupils, and ask the class to speak these sentences so as to give as many meanings as possible by changing the expression. Even a single word may be made to give several meanings. The word "oh!" for example, may be used to express the meaning of whole sentences of varied meanings by giving it different shades of expression.

The true method of teaching expressive reading is based on three laws:

1. Children are naturally expressive in speech and gesture.

2. They may be made more expressive both of emotion and thought by freeing them of self-consciousness and developing their imaginations. Both these results may be attained most effectively by dramatic personation.

3. When forceful expression has become habitual pupils express properly when reading what they are capable of extracting from visible language.

It is of vital importance that a good reader should have two powers: the habit of forceful expression in conversation, and the power of rapid, accurate, and comprehensive thought extraction from visible language. He expresses most who sees most to express. Great power to read silently is the most essential element in good oral reading.

CHAPTER VIII

VARIETY IN READING MATTER FOR PRIMARY CLASSES

It is wise to have as great variety of good primers as possible. The primers to be excluded are those in which the illustrations are objective instead of subjective, and are intended to suggest words or thought to the children. The pictures should not suggest words or the thought in the lessons. They should arouse and sustain interest in reading, but the words should be recognized by the independent power of word recognition that has been given to the pupils, and the thought should be gained from the reading matter and not from the pictures. The pictures in a primer may be used profitably, if the teacher asks her pupils to write stories about them before they have read the lessons they are intended to illustrate.

But the best reading matter for primary classes should be home made. Thousands of stories told in a few lines may easily be collected, and mounted on small cards. These cards are invaluable for silent or oral reading. The best use that can be made of them is to let the children read them silently and then stand and relate the stories in their own language. Day by day the time allowed for reading the stories should be gradually and slowly reduced.

Each school should have an unlimited supply of good white cards about six inches long and four inches wide. The pupils in the primary classes should write stories of their own as soon as they can

write. The best of these should be chosen by the teacher, or composite stories made by combining the best elements in two or more of them. These should be given to the highest classes in the school and written by the pupils in these classes on the white cards, leaving room for illustrations at the top of the cards. The illustrations should be made by the senior pupils. It is a good plan to allow several pupils to design pictures to illustrate the same story and to choose the best design and allow its maker to draw it on the card. In this way the primary teacher will gradually accumulate a collection of the most interesting stories for children: those written by the children themselves. The pupils in the higher classes will have the best kind of practice in designing and good practice in writing. For very young pupils the teacher may cut the cards into strips, and write short sentences on them. The little ones should be allowed to step out of the class and tell the teacher what the cards say, taking their places in line and coming to the teacher in turn.

Stories written by pupils in the second or third classes often make very interesting reading matter for the first classes.

Good editions of fairy tales, folk stories, myths told in simple language, and nursery rhymes, should lie on the teacher's table, or stand on the shelves of the little class library to be read by the most advanced pupils, as soon as they are promoted to the class of honor in reading. It will be a great incentive to a pupil to know, that when he reaches a certain standard of excellence he will be allowed to take a book from the library to read it at home.

In cities and towns, reading matter may be exchanged by the schools.

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